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Michael Harrington

Getting Out of Vietnam

PRESIDENT NIXON'S SPEECH on November 3rd almost certainly rallied a majority of the people behind his policy. But that vote of confidence is strictly limited as to time, as on a similar occasion Lyndon Johnson discovered; and if, as seems likely, the war goes on and "Vietnamization" fails, Mr. Nixon is going to be confronted by even greater pressure for change. That is why the Moratorium after brilliant beginnings must prepare for the long haul. Almost any President, and certainly a new one, can get support for his conduct of a war the first time he goes to the country and makes a patriotic appeal. The reason for this is well-known. On issues of domestic policy, like wages or medical insurance, the average citizen can check what the President says against his own experience. But on global questions the people have few sources of information, they assume that the White House has an excellent intelligence network (even after the Bay of Pigs and Vietnam), and they join ranks behind the Commander in Chief.

But there is a catch. If the evidence becomes overwhelming that the President is wrong, if a promised victory turns into a defeat, then there can be a mass defection. In December 1967, Lyndon Johnson was going up in the opinion polls: many were hostile to the Pentagon demonstrations in October and General Westmoreland had just made the annual, optimistic analysis of the course of the conflict. But by March there had been the Tet offensive, the McCarthy campaign in New Hampshire, and Robert Kennedy's entry into the race. Johnson resigned from politics on March 31.

So Mr. Nixon's fate depends in large measure upon what happens in Vietnam. Even his hawkish speech was presented as a kind of "peace plan" with America ending its involvement either through a negotiated settlement or

"Vietnamization." And on that last count, the President's preposterous analysis of how this country got into the war makes it highly unlikely that his scenario for getting out of it will ever come to pass.

"Fifteen years ago," Mr. Nixon said, "North Vietnam, with the logistical support of Communist China and the Soviet Union, launched a campaign to impose a Communist government on South Vietnam by instigating and supporting a revolution." This notion that the war is a result of an international Communist conspiracy and an external aggression is not simply erroneous. It also makes it impossible for anyone who believes it to recognize the political realities in that tortured country. And it provides the utterly unreal premise on which "Vietnamization" is based: that "our" government in Saigon is engaged in the nationalist defense of the homeland and can therefore prevail if only provided with sufficient arms.

The reason the United States got involved in Vietnam was, first of all, the Korean War. For it was in the early fifties, when the scene of the Cold War suddenly shifted from Europe to Asia, that the French saw an opportunity to get American support for their colonial policy in Indo-China. So it was that by the time of the French defeat and withdrawal in 1954, the United States was paying around 80 percent of the cost of their imperialist venture. And some of the people on the payroll, fighting for Paris against their own countrymen, were later to turn up as our men in Saigon.

After the division of Vietnam, there was relative quiet until, in the late fifties, Diem's repression struck at the South Vietnamese nationalists. The Communists in the South, Jean Lacoture has noted, were the last to take to the *maquis* since they were sticking to the soft line established in Geneva in 1954. It was only

when Saigon had forced the nationalist opposition into armed revolt that the Communists joined up—and took over. From that moment until the present, a civil war and a Communist drive for power were inextricably, and tragically, bound together. But this development was hardly invented in Hanoi, Moscow, or Peking. It was, and is, indigenous to the political history of the South even though the other Communist powers supplied arms and, in the case of Hanoi from 1965 on, men.

In view of this history it is absurd to think that the Thieu-Ky government can suddenly improvise the political strength that would allow them to defend themselves militarily. In the last election, they got only a third of the vote in a ballot which they themselves supervised and which excluded the advocates of a negotiated settlement on the grounds that they were pro-Communist. How Mr. Nixon can think that such a clique can easily dispense with the services of half a million American soldiers is hard to understand. And, in any case, it is a brutal denouement to almost a quarter of a century of war to offer the people whom we theoretically fought to defend a prospect of more war.

But if "Vietnamization" is going to fail, what are the alternatives? Under the present circumstances the Thieu-Ky regime, which understandably hailed the Nixon speech, has no incentive to move from its effective refusal of any form of coalition with the National Liberation Front, be it in the form of an election commission or a new government. There are, to be sure, Saigon statements which accept the principle of coalition but since any South Vietnamese who takes them seriously is threatened with prison one can assume that they are, up to now, intended for American consumption.

CONSEQUENTLY, THERE IS LITTLE HOPE for a political settlement in Vietnam since the Saigon regime doesn't want one—and probably could not survive one. And, as Averell Harriman pointed out, Mr. Nixon himself brusquely rejected one of the most conciliatory statements Ho Chi Minh ever made. So all the evidence points to a continuation of the war and a failure of "Vietnamization." That might mean that Mr. Nixon will decide to extricate himself from

the impasse in the classic, Lyndon Johnson manner: by escalation.

There are already disturbing domestic signs that such a Rightist "solution" to the Vietnam tragedy might be in the making. For the Nixon administration has been sponsoring a modest revival of Joe McCarthyism, administrative style, and if it succeeds in polarizing the society and stigmatizing the advocacy of peace as subversion, that will create the mood for an increase in the violence in Southeast Asia. Nixon himself was soft-voiced in his McCarthyite insinuation but the basic smear was still there. "North Vietnam cannot defeat or humiliate the United States," he said. "Only Americans can do that."

This pious, prissy slander of the peace movement was followed by much more vigorous attacks from the Attorney General, the Secretary of Transportation, and the Postmaster General. The Justice Department practically sent an engraved invitation to the violence freaks on the Left to be sure and turn up and do their thing in November, and when the march, to Mr. Mitchell's chagrin, was largely peaceful, the facts were altered to fit the predictions about them. All of this was compounded by a communications policy, enunciated by Nixon's Nixon, Spiro Agnew, and by Dean Burch, in which the government used its great power to intimidate the media.

All of this is disturbing enough to read in the *New York Times* but, if I may add a personal note, it is much more frightening to experience first-hand. On November 13, I gave three speeches as part of the Moratorium. The third was held on the parking lot of a Long Island shopping center and featured Dave Livingston, the trade unionist, Congressman Allard Lowenstein, and myself. We and 300 supporters of the Moratorium holding candles were joined by 50 or so Rightists brandishing flags, chanting "Go Back to Russia, Let the Flag Speak," and I was hit in the back of the head by a very light, not at all painful, missile, but a missile nevertheless. If there is more death and frustration in Vietnam, that McCarthyite atmosphere could become pervasive and provide the emotional justification for escalation.

But how, then, should the democratic Left respond?

Until this year, I believed that a negotiated settlement was the only way out of Vietnam.

It could, I thought, provide at least some protection for the non- and anti-Communists in South Vietnam. In any case, it was the only form of a peace proposal which the American public would accept and therefore, whatever one thought of the abstract question of unilateral withdrawal, a realistic political struggle for peace had to make negotiations its key demand. And this is what the mainstream peace movement did in its most successful effort, the McCarthy and Kennedy campaigns.

But now the situation has changed. The American people have become so weary of the war that a significant minority of perhaps 40 percent is prepared to accept the logic of withdrawal and, if the bloodshed continues, that uncommitted center which Mr. Nixon won over with his speech could come to the same conclusion. Moreover, one year of negotiations—and of death—has clearly demonstrated that

Saigon has a vested interest in subverting even the possibility of a settlement. As a result, there is a paradoxical situation: only an American commitment to withdraw can make a negotiated settlement possible.

But for such a tactic to work, the commitment to withdraw must be serious and specific. Vague promises, like the ones Mr. Nixon made, will not inspire, or threaten, Thieu and Ky. But a clear statement that all the American troops are leaving in a given period of time might. To face facts, the result of such a commitment could be to harden Hanoi and the National Liberation Front, to frustrate any agreement, and to prepare the way for an NLF take-over in the South. Moreover, if that were to take place there is a very good possibility that the mass terror employed by Ho in the North in the fifties when the peasants were forcibly collectivized, or that visited by the Viet Cong on Hue in 1968, will occur again.

That is a tragic and terrible chance. It is the direct consequence of an American policy that identified with French colonialism and its heirs in Vietnam and drove the nationalist movement into the arms of a clever, hardened Communist cadre. It demonstrates that there is no easy way to free a nation like ours from a generation of errors. And it is, under the anguished circumstances, a risk that must probably be taken.

If an American commitment to withdraw does not force negotiations, if it leads to a Communist victory and terror, that seems to me a lesser evil to the other choices. For escalation, or even a continuation of the current levels of violence, involves terror and death too (see the revelations of the horrible massacre of Vietnamese civilians by U.S. troops last year), but with no possibility of an acceptable outcome and with the real chance of provoking an international catastrophe. Moreover, these possibilities also involve the threat of a revived American McCarthyism and the certainty that our desperate social problems at home will be ignored.

There are moments—Hungary in 1956, Czechoslovakia in 1968—when democrats must stand by while freedom is repressed because armed intervention would provoke even greater evils. And in Vietnam this is even truer, since no one would care to equate Thieu and Ky with the freedom movements of Budapest and Prague. America should, of course, take all the

The Unions And Haynsworth

WHATEVER its ultimate consequences, the refusal of the Senate to ratify the nomination of Justice Haynsworth to the Supreme Court was a sharp rebuke to an administration that daily shows itself to be more reactionary and deceitful. Behind the Senate's action was an extremely well-organized lobbying effort by the AFL-CIO and the NAACP, the two "traditional" bulwarks of the ruptured labor-liberal-Negro alliance. Every Washington commentator agrees that the campaign to expose Haynsworth's political outlook and public record was largely the work of these organizations.

Perhaps there is a point here worth reflection by people on the Left. There is, God knows, plenty to criticize in the recent conduct of the trade unions concerning Vietnam. But it seems utterly foolish and self-defeating for people on the Left to keep repeating, as one hears them do, that the unions have simply become "conservative." On many crucial domestic issues they remain a major force for progress. If a viable electoral bloc is to be reconstituted in order to defeat Nixon and all he stands for, the unions and groups like the NAACP will have to be major segments of it. Meanwhile, those of us who have at some points been critical of the unions ought to have the grace to say that in rallying sentiment against Haynsworth, both Roy Wilkins and George Meany did a fine job.

—I. H.

steps to provide safety for those who believed in the promises we never should have made, the scoundrels among them included. We should offer the chance of emigration to America to anyone who wants to take it. But we must get out and soon.

The policy I advocate is not without its ambiguities and perils, yet it is the only hope I can see for ending the horror in Southeast Asia. There will be difficult times ahead and yet the new-found confidence of Nixon and his bully boys should not intimidate us. For if the Nixon policy fails, as I think it will, America will have to settle with this issue for once and for all, and will desperately need a vigorous peace movement to help it do so.

Nicolaus C. Mills

Strikebreaking By the Pentagon

IN 1966, the year before Cesar Chavez's United Farm Workers Organizing Committee began its national boycott of California grapes, South Vietnam was the world's 23rd largest importer of fresh table grapes from America. Today it is the world's fifth largest importer, a figure that puts its consumption patterns well beyond those of most European nations. The reason for this change is not difficult to locate. Despite an official policy of neutrality, the Defense Department has become one of the major supporters of California grape growers. In the last fiscal year alone, fresh grape purchases for all armed services were increased by 50 percent and for troops in Vietnam by 350 percent!

For the United Farm Workers, who are still excluded from the protection of the National Labor Relations Act and from equal coverage under the minimum wage law, the federal government has long been a thorn in the side of organizing. But Defense Department purchases of grapes are in excess of anything UFWOC expected. They represent 2.4 percent of all

fresh grape production in the U.S., a percentage capable of shoring up prices on three to four times that number of grapes and of seriously hampering a boycott that has struggled to reduce grape shipments to 36 major cities in the country by as much as 20 percent.

UFWOC's indignation that the Defense Department should, as UFWOC's vice-president Dolores Huerta charged, be "acting as a buyer of last resort for scab grapes," is shared by many others. Senator Walter Mondale says:

It may well be that the policy of the Defense Department is a neutral one, but it is a neutrality that obviously favors the growers in the labor dispute surrounding the grape strike today.

I think it is asking too much of the average farm worker [to tell him] to believe that the Defense Department is being neutral when it . . . is buying more table grapes than at any time in the history of the Defense Department, and has responded by saying they have solicited telegram requests to all points around the world urging their [food procurement officers'] consideration of the use of table grapes.

ALONG WITH these unprecedented purchases of grapes, the Department has taken the following steps during the California grape boycott:

- (1) recommending grapes and only grapes as a substitute fruit when a shortage of oranges developed, although other citrus fruits might also have been recommended;
- (2) giving "high troop acceptability" as a primary reason for choosing grapes as a substitute fruit when virtually all fresh fruits have "high troop acceptability";
- (3) having as its number one grape contractor, Giumarra Vineyards Corporation, the company against which UFWOC began its strike and the leading antiunion grower in the San Joaquin Valley (39 of the first 40 growers used by the Defense Department are also from California);
- (4) ignoring the fact that the low cost and wide availability of grapes are directly related to the California grape boycott and attributing increased Defense Department purchases to "normal factors of supply and demand";
- (5) awarding contracts to growers who have been convicted of illegally recruiting migrant workers and violating health and safety standards.

Meanwhile, the Department has argued that it would not be neutral to "freeze" grape purchases at the level they were before the boycott began. This has led Senator Mondale to conclude:

Finally, and most destructively, the Defense Department admitted that if the price of grapes were to fall due to the effects of the consumer boycott, the Defense Department would further increase its grape purchases—thereby committing the Defense Department to a policy of undermining the nation-wide boycott.

To what degree the Defense Department can be moved from this position by public pressure is a question. There is good reason to believe that a military-agricultural complex is as formidable as a military-industrial one.

Eugenia Kemble

A UFT Victory Among Nonwhite Workers

IN NOVEMBER 1968 the United Federation of Teachers was in the final stage of the longest and most acrimonious strike in its history, one the leadership saw as a "struggle for survival," but which a wide variety of commentators, vocal elements in the black and Puerto Rican communities, and even the New York Civil Liberties Union bitterly attacked.

Among the union's critics were Nat Hentoff who, week after week, denounced the UFT in the *Village Voice*; Jason Epstein who, in the *New York Review of Books*, concluded that the "conflicting interests" between parents and teachers were "irreconcilable"; and Dwight McDonald, who regarded the strike as a "racial issue" largely "fabricated" by the UFT.

A majority of the critics interpreted the dispute in terms of racial and parent-teacher conflict. It could hardly be expected, to judge from these reports, that the post-strike atmosphere would be anything but bitter for a long time to come.

Last November, less than a year later, the UFT won a collective bargaining election which

gave it the right to represent 3,500 NYC school para-professionals,* the bulk of whom are black and Puerto Rican, and also parents of school-age children. In view of the furious attack made upon the UFT a few months earlier for its racial attitude, this was a development of some significance, but one that apparently went either unnoticed or was ignored by those who had kept such a close watch on the UFT in late 1968. Yet, ironically, it was the same strength the UFT had exhibited in its dispute with the Ocean Hill-Brownsville project that won it the votes of many para-professionals.

Though the election took place in June 1969, only eight months after the strike, a final decision was not made on its outcome until much later—mainly because it was poorly run and many voted who should not have. Voters had a choice between the UFT, District Council 37 of the State, County and Municipal Employees Union, and "no union." Challenged ballots were finally counted in November and the final tally came to 1,248 for the UFT, and 1,195 for District Council 37. With this the UFT won the larger college-bound unit of para-professionals. A smaller group of 500 was awarded to D.C. 37 by a margin of 50 votes.

Though the margin of victory was narrow, the fact that the UFT won at all was a major accomplishment for an organization that was supposedly so low in the esteem of minority communities. Even in Ocean Hill-Brownsville there was a strong UFT vote. A majority of the challenged ballots, which were from schools in that district, contained votes for the UFT. In fact, over 50 para-professionals from two Ocean Hill schools alone have since joined the union and are bringing nonunion teachers with them.

When it started its organizing drive last March, the odds appeared to be against the UFT. It was bucking the widely held notion that it was hostile to minorities; it was operating on an integrationist philosophy at a time

* An umbrella term used to designate a variety of nonteaching assistant-type jobs in the New York City schools, for which the Board of Education now pays from \$1.75 to \$3.25 an hour, depending on educational level. Initially para-professionals were to be given the opportunity to climb up what Frank Riessman has called a "career ladder" to become teachers. Federal and state funding shortages have limited this aspect of their jobs.

Carl Gershman

Black Nationalism And Conservative Politics

when separatism had seemingly captured the thinking of blacks and Puerto Ricans in the city. Such sentiments, to the extent that they really existed and weren't merely a figment of journalistic imaginations, soon dissolved as the para-professionals began to take their economic and job-related interests seriously.

More tangible roadblocks for the UFT included the fear of strikes felt by many para-professionals. With the memory of the 1968 strike still fresh in the minds of the para-professionals, union organizers found it difficult to convince them that the UFT was not strike-prone. Ultimately, those who voted UFT did so in spite of their fear.

IF REASONABLE CONCLUSIONS are to be drawn from the random queries of pro-UFT voters, then their desire to be with the "educators' union" and the "strong union" were the reasons behind most votes. Since only 33 votes were cast for "no union" (less than 1 percent), it appears that for most voters the choice was one between unions and did not involve a rejection of the *idea* of unionism.

So: Hentoff, Epstein, and McDonald notwithstanding, a group of black and Puerto Rican school personnel have chosen to join with the UFT on the basis of vocational and economic interest. And these fundamentals of the para-professionals' alignment with the teachers managed to reduce the well-cultivated hostility to the UFT.

A transition seems underway. Many black and Puerto Rican para-professionals are now members of UFT chapters in schools throughout the city. Many of these are parents who will begin to see the problems of teaching through their own experience. They are people who relay their thoughts on teaching to the professional teachers with whom they work. And like teachers, they too will periodically be negotiating a new contract. The exchange of opinions on problems of mutual interest is bound to increase the possibilities for alliances between parents and teachers, and blacks and whites in the school system.

Those who found it so easy a year ago to interpret the New York school situation as an "irreconcilable conflict" ought, in fairness, to take another look now.

ON A PLEASANT SUNDAY last fall, 150 black groups marched up Seventh Avenue from 111th Street in New York City's first Afro-American Day parade. Miss Black America and Adam Clayton Powell were on hand, as were a marching band from a Southern college and about 35 Black Panthers. The occasion was reminiscent of the parades Marcus Garvey led almost half a century ago, though it lacked the extravagant costumes designating the orders of African nobility which Garvey created, and little reference was made to going back to Africa. The Afro-American Day parade was more an expression of racial pride here and now.

To what degree does such a parade reflect the social and political realities of Harlem or any other black ghetto? Was it merely a parade bringing together for the purpose of pageantry individuals who, in their everyday experiences, have little in common, or was it symbolic of the unifying force of race in the lives of black Americans? The question is relevant, for during the past three years black nationalism has become an increasingly popular ideology among Negroes. It has not taken hold among a majority, but the minority advocating it is vocal, visible, and well publicized.

If black nationalism is narrowly defined as a proposal for establishing a separate black nation, either in Africa or the U.S., then black nationalists represent a tiny fringe element. But if it is defined more broadly to include all those blacks who favor separatism, either in the form of racially exclusive Black Studies programs, community control of all ghetto institutions, or other programs, then nationalism is a growing movement.

The two groups of black nationalists I have identified are not entirely distinct. Spokesmen for community control, for example, may use the rhetoric of narrow nationalism when they speak of independent black communities, but they have not yet gone so far as to propose

secession. They sometimes indulge in the "fantasy" of a separate black nation (ignoring all of the contradictions in this position Theodore Draper so brilliantly analyzed in the September 1969 issue of *Commentary*); but their broader version of nationalism retains a strong element of reality—they are merely proposing the extension and institutionalization of the patterns of segregation which already exist, hoping thereby to increase the power, as well as the racial pride, of Negroes.

That this position is realistic does not mean it is without illusion. Its realism consists of resignation; its illusion enables a psychological adjustment to existing socioeconomic relations to appear progressive. Conditions of employment, health, and housing remain the same; but names are changed, militant postures assumed, myths created. And pervading every aspect of this new psychology is the notion of salvation through heightened racial awareness.

The emergence of racial politics during the present conservative period is not surprising. When conditions make it impossible to achieve change in the world, radical energy is turned inward to the self. In the absence of concrete gains, people seek symbolic victories. Racial issues—based upon "genetic verities"—become prominent, while issues relating to social class—which deal essentially with environmental problems subject to change—are deemphasized. The result is a strange mixture of racial militancy and political conservatism.

YET WHILE the realities of social conflict can be excluded from nationalist rhetoric, they have their way of intruding into the daily transactions of people's lives. For the very isolation of the black community which nationalists seem to desire would widen, rather than narrow, the inner divisions among Negroes. In the context of the whole society, Negroes will tend to act as a group to secure advantages for themselves. In the last election, for example, they voted overwhelmingly for Humphrey, and in local elections throughout the country this cohesiveness has been maintained. Thereby they have tried, well or not, to exert some power within the society. But in a racially exclusive situation, where all the available power is exercised within a self-contained community, political and economic divisions must soon

assert themselves. In this sense, community control means that some group of individuals, whether elected, appointed, or self-designated, will control the community.

One obvious consequence is the kind of bitter in-fighting that has developed in Ocean Hill-Brownsville, where the local school board refused to permit community elections for an advisory panel to help run a \$4 million state education project. The panel would have had considerable control over the use of the money. A leader of the opposition to the governing board was quoted in the *New York Post* (January 28, 1969) as saying, "We community residents are getting the same treatment from the governing board that they say they got from the central Board of Education. They're not giving community people any chance to have a voice."

And in a letter to the Board of Education protesting their exclusion from the planning of the 1969 graduation exercises at I.S. 271 (also listing other complaints against local school officials, including the breakdown of discipline at the school and the "appalling" loss of teachers), members of the school's Parent Association wrote that

One can readily understand why parents of graduating elementary school students feeding into I.S. 271 have protested to the Board of Education about sending their children to this school. What is going on here is not education but a systematic brainwashing detrimental to the education of our children. We in the Parent Association do not intend to stand by and watch these conditions continue. Many of us fought for community control, not community dictatorship that is being perpetrated by a small minority who do not live in nor reflect the feelings of this community.

Such divisions of power and opinion are *likely* to occur in an independent local school district, but they would *inevitably* occur over economic issues in a separate black economy—assuming, for the moment, that such an economy is possible. For the division between management and labor does not disappear if the parties involved happen to be black. The profits of the one side would most likely be smaller and the wages of the other side correspondingly lower than if both parties were white; but the relationship necessarily leads to a certain amount of conflict. This point was sharply illustrated by a recent strike of a Newspaper

Guild local against the *Amsterdam News*; the refusal of the management of Chock Full o' Nuts to permit unionization of its employees (Jackie Robinson argued the case for management in this dispute); and the strike against the Harlem River Consumers Cooperative by Local 388 of the Retail, Wholesale, and Chain Store Food Employees Union.

By ignoring social and economic interests that threaten the logic of their racial analysis, nationalists have taken some strange positions. Marcus Garvey is a hero of today's nationalists, as though it is forgotten that one of his own heroes was the moderate, yet nevertheless separatist, Booker T. Washington, a figure whose place in current nationalist historiography rivals that of Trotsky in the Soviet Union. Furthermore, Garvey was an admirer of the Ku Klux Klan which shared his commitment to racial purity. His hostility to trade unions has been inherited by CORE, which has cooperated with the National Right-To-Work Committee, and by the Republic of New Africa whose Vice-President, Milton Henry, has proposed to ban trade unions from the black nation he hopes some day to create. Such a "legal" repression of trade unions is, one cannot help but think, symbolic of the tendency among all black nationalists to repress psychologically a consideration of the social and economic factors which clash with their world view.

BLACK NATIONALISM is likely to remain an important force within the Negro community, particularly in the absence of broad reforms. Yet it will continue to be, as it was in the past, more an emotional release during periods of stagnation than a political program for social change. It will isolate Negroes from political allies and, consequently, reduce their influence in determining the direction of national policy.

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Moreover, to the degree that it encourages the creation of separate Negro communities, black nationalism must sooner or later undermine itself, for it will destroy black unity by transferring the focus of economic and political conflict from the whole society, in which opponents are generally white and wealthy, to a segregated community, in which opponents are inevitably black. Such a situation, far from benefiting impoverished Negroes, would only compound the injustices from which they suffer. And it would make the goal of a genuinely equalitarian society, which now appears to be so elusive, recede even further from the realm of political possibility.

George G. Eckstein

Social Democratic Victory —Healthy Turn in Germany

THE WEST GERMAN ELECTION this past September could mark a turning point in the political history of a country dominated, since its inception, by conservative forces. A positive answer has been given to two important questions:

(1) whether the strategy of the Social Democrats (SPD), evolved three years ago, of joining the Christian Democrats (CDU) in a "Great Coalition" would pay off in a sufficiently increased vote to dislodge the CDU from the government;

(2) whether the vote for the NPD, the neo-Nazi party, could be kept below the 5 percent needed to enter the Bonn parliament.

A major contributing factor was the recent turn toward the Left by the small but decisive Free Democratic party (FDP), at the cost of most of its conservative vote. Under its progressive new leader, Walter Scheel, it had earlier assured the election of the SPD's highly respected Gustav Heinemann to the Presidency of West Germany. This parliamentary vote foreshadowed the formation of a fairly homogeneous "Small Coalition" of SPD and FDP.

For the SPD and its leading strategist, Herbert Wehner, the election was the payoff for a

policy that had started by transforming the party from a workers' party to a people's party (not without initial opposition from the old Left), and a demonstration that the SPD could be entrusted with the affairs of the nation. Now, for the first time since the formation of the new German state, the CDU has been forced into opposition, and this may well bring out the differences between its left wing of Catholic workers and its right wing of reactionary farmers and businessmen. This is a healthy development—especially in Germany with its still shaky democratic tradition. It means a first taste of a two-party system with all that it implies: an acceptance of change and an incentive toward moderation.

It means also that the higher bureaucracy, so long a fief of conservatism, can no longer take its position for granted. For the SPD, with revolution simply no longer in the cards, it was essential to break out of the position of a permanent minority party. Such confinement is demoralizing for a party of the Left, as it would not be for a conservative party that has always its economic command posts through which to exercise power.

The success of the SPD was won in a campaign during which the Christian Democrats tried to play the old nationalist tune, and even attempted to exploit the fact that Willy Brandt had left the country during the Hitler era. These tactics no longer pay off, which illustrates the change that has come over the German people.

THIS CHANGE has become apparent in other ways. According to sources quoted in the *Spiegel*, the SPD made its largest gains in areas with heavy administrative and service enterprises; the "new, educated middle class" of administrative, managerial, professional, and academic personnel now makes up 10–11 percent of the SPD vote (doubled in the last four years). In my own, admittedly limited, recent personal contacts with Germans in this class, who are mostly in their 30s and early 40s, I found them surprisingly open-minded, well-informed, independent, and cosmopolitan—quite a change from the previous generation. It is a hopeful sign for the country in general and the SPD in particular, provided the party develops an openness to new ideas, and will

not get bogged down in bureaucratic mediocrity. The SPD has also attracted the sympathies of a good many intellectuals, with Günter Grass particularly active in the election campaign. A fair number of intellectuals (and ministers!) allied themselves with the Communist party in the ADF (Action for Democratic Progress) and, together with students, make up the APO (Extra-Parliamentary Opposition). The APO boycotted the election with the brilliant slogan "Pigs rule, asses vote." The APO's major component, the SDS, is far more political-minded than its U.S. counterpart, although by no means more sophisticated. It did participate in the campaign—but by disrupting meetings of all parties and painting Hitler moustaches indiscriminately on the pictures of all candidates.*

In the ADF, the newly re-formed, but not reformed, CP managed to assemble the usual complement of innocent and not-so-innocent fellow travelers, mainly pacifists and professors. The defense of the invasion of Czechoslovakia repelled whoever might have been fooled by the Popular Front jargon, and even in the former Communist bastion of Hamburg, the ADF got no more than 1.2 percent of the vote. As election day drew near, many ADF and APO people seem to have followed the pattern of American radicals in the 1968 election, and wound up giving at least one of their two votes to the SPD.

The NPD is actually less a neo-Nazi party than one of the nationalistic groups which in Germany periodically gather the votes of disgruntled people. Ex-Nazis form only a small part of its membership; it seems to attract a number of young people, especially in small Protestant towns. It alienated many potential voters when its Security Service roughed up opponents at its meetings, and it provoked mass counterdemonstrations in all the larger cities. At any rate, the party got only half the vote it had received in the preceding *Länder* elections. If one considers that in the U.S. Wallace managed to get 13 percent of the vote, the mere 4.3 percent of the NPD is a sign of the Germans' growing political maturity.

* During one of these disruptions, Franz Josef Strauss of the Christian Democrats' right wing made his now famous remark about "those animals to whom human laws need not apply," which evoked frightening memories.

II

THE GREAT COALITION under Kiesinger-Brandt took over from the Erhard government in 1966 at a moment of economic recession and general anxiety. In less than a year, the threat of depression was eliminated by a strong infusion of federal funds into the economy and a steady boom that reached record proportions by mid-1969. Industrial production rose by 13 percent over the last year, GNP by almost 10 percent. Unemployment stood at an all-time low of 100,000, with 850,000 jobs unfilled, and a foreign work force of over 1.5 million. The SPD's Karl Schiller, whose policies were largely responsible for this result, earned tremendous popularity, even among business leaders.

The most remarkable feature of the boom was its price stability. In eight years, from 1962 to mid-1969, industrial prices rose only 1.5 percent (all of it in the last year), and the cost of living index only 19 percent (of which 2.7 percent occurred in the last year). This feat was achieved through increased productivity and the cooperation of the trade unions. Fearful of continued unemployment, which at that time stood at one million, the unions promised Schiller in late 1966 a virtual moratorium on wage demands and accepted a modest rate of increase, together with long-term contracts, as late as early 1968. Even though, under pressure of a labor shortage, the actual wage increases outpaced the contractual minimums, they remained well below the increases in productivity. With most of Germany's foreign trade partners plagued by inflation, this put Germany's export industries at a decided competitive advantage.

Schiller, with the concurrence of all the leading economists, tried to dampen the export boom and to redirect it toward domestic consumption in the spring of 1969 by a revaluation of the Mark, but he was overruled by Kiesinger and Strauss for purely electoral reasons. Revaluation was put into effect as one of the first acts of the Brandt government, but it may have lost some of its hoped-for impact. For by now the German price stability has become shattered, and an upward price movement has begun which may not reach the present inflationary level of the U.S. but is conservatively expected to be at least 5 percent per year.

The ostensible excuse for the price moves

are the wage boosts averaging 10–11 percent, which were granted under the impact of the series of brief wildcat strikes that began in the steel industry in early September and spread quickly to other major industries: mining, shipbuilding, chemicals, public services. To fully appreciate this event, one must remember that there have been virtually no wildcat strikes in the history of the German workers, with their strong attachment and obedience to their unions. In fact, there were no strikes of *any* kind from 1964 to mid-1969: a yearly average of 5 days lost per 1000 workers, versus 862 in Italy, 447 in the USA, and 30 even in peaceful Sweden. The union leaders were taken completely by surprise and roundly booed when they initially tried to have the contracts respected (which mostly had two to five more months to run).

Only later did they cite the temper of the workers to obtain fast concessions from a management, which by then had been thoroughly scared into acceptance of most of the demands. These demands often consisted only of advances against and the predating of coming wage increases, adjustment of differentials within industries, and payment of time lost through strikes. The workers, more insightful than their bureaucratized union leaders, had sensed both the strength and the justness of their position, in face of the labor shortage and tremendous industry profits. On the whole, they had the press and the public on their side, and the negative effect on the SPD vote feared by many did not materialize.

Yet, the workers cold-shouldered the clumsy attempts of some New Left students who tried to enter into the strike movement. This strike movement developed its own leaders, chiefly from among the elected members of the plant councils. Brief as it was, this spontaneous strike movement will undoubtedly leave a mark on the consciousness of the German workers.

With a largely Social Democratic government, one can expect a continued if moderate militancy. The unions have already raised their wage demands to 58 percent in five years, with about 11 percent each in 1969 and 1970, and 6–8 percent thereafter—together with a shortened work week. These demands are likely to be met; how much the settlements will represent an increase in real wages will depend on the extent to which prices are kept stable.

Another demand of the unions (and in the program of the SPD) has been sacrificed on the altar of the coalition: the expansion of "codetermination," the representation of unions on the boards of directors of all large corporations. I don't think much has been lost when this demand was dropped. Within a capitalist setup, such an institution is more likely to lead to a fiction than to the actuality of workers' participation in management. It has existed for years now in mining and steel, with the director who represents the workers rarely more than a figurehead tying the unions in with management and formalizing the interchangeable bureaucracy characterized by Galbraith as "technostructure." The strengthening of participation in *plant* management, which has been promised as an alternative, could become more productive than an empty codetermination—provided it is vigorously pursued by the workers.

III

WILLY BRANDT WANTS his government to be known as one of "internal reforms." Much of the program he has presented is modest and noncontroversial. It aims at "modernization" and could be subscribed to by all but the most conservative members of the opposition: tax reform favoring the low- and middle-income groups; strengthening of the federal government's role in education and science; continuation of the reform of criminal law begun under the preceding government (unfortunately under a much weaker Minister of Justice); some streamlining of the administration; lowering the voting age to 18 years; reduction of the term for military service and extension of substitute civilian service (to reduce the high number of conscientious objectors); continuation of Schiller's neo-Keynesian economic policy of stable growth and balancing of economic

forces, including a stronger antitrust law; comprehensive city planning.

In foreign policy, a government's freedom of action is severely limited, and any West German government is additionally hampered by its dependence on U.S. military protection. Change may here be more atmospheric than basic; still this can make a substantial difference in certain areas. The election was greeted by Brezhnev "as an unmistakable success of the democratic forces." Even Ulbricht was grudgingly forced into some promising gestures. In his programmatic speech before the Bundestag on October 28, Brandt promised a more realistic acceptance of the two Germanys, as well as a willingness to reestablish relations with Poland, based on a *de facto* acceptance of the new frontiers. But unless the Russians and East Germans soften some of their conditions, only cautious change can be expected.

Willy Brandt's government has a precarious majority. Yet the CDU may prove a divided and inept opposition and thus may give him a full four-year tenure, or at least the opportunity to build up some achievement before a new election. The decisive feature of both his government and his party seems to be the appearance of a new crop of activists, undogmatic younger men, college-bred, with few ties to working-class movements or ideology (Marxist or otherwise), somewhat along the lines of our Allard Lowensteins. Clearly, socialism is not much on their minds. But then, in the past the worst aspect of German socialism had been that it concealed its failures and defeats under radical rhetoric. There is very little rhetoric today, so maybe there is hope for success. The important question will be whether the new men will turn out to be ordinary careerists who see in the new SPD little more than a vehicle for their own ambitions—or whether they will move Germany forward to a more solid democratic foundation.

Song My

The horrifying news of the massacre at Song My was broken just at the time we were closing this issue of *DISSENT*, too late for us to be able to comment. We will of course come back to this in our next issue.—Ed.

Workers, Black and White

Thomas R. Brooks

DRUMbeats in Detroit

DODGE MAIN, an ungainly collection of four- and six-story, 1920s-genre factory buildings, occupies roughly a square mile of Hamtramck just across the Detroit City line. The front-office windows are wire-meshed against some feared assault, or perhaps just against small boys throwing rocks, and the factory windows are begrimed beyond recognition. At shift break, workers erupt out of the main gate, quite as the masses poured out of the mine-pits and factory maws of Art Young's cartoons. Scarcely heeding the traffic lights recently installed at their demand and for their protection, they rush across Joseph Campau to the bars on the opposite side of the street or to their cars parked nose-to-nose in giant parking lots. Men, women, many of them young and a large number black, hurry away as fast as their second-hand cars will take them. Not one ever looks back.

The union hall is already a 1940s relic, located a block or so up Joseph Campau from Dodge Main. Standing before the hall, one's view of the plant is partially blocked by a railroad bridge and the lineup of piggy-backed cars waiting shipment. The second "D" and first "L" are missing from the once-proud blue letters over the doorway, "DO GE OCAL 3." A picture of Frank-

lin D. Roosevelt looms darkly in the back corner of one fair-sized meeting hall. In the anteroom of another, larger hall, several groups of retired workers play cards and chat in Polish. Within the hall itself, some forty-odd black workers and a handful of white workers hold a district meeting.

Dodge Main is the home of DRUM (Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement), the founding contingent of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers. "There isn't a more likely place in Detroit for the DRUM phenomenon," I was told by an auto union official, who readily conceded that this surfacing of black militancy in the Detroit-area auto plants had "somewhat surprised Solidarity House," Detroit shorthand for the top leadership of the United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America. An auto worker, young, white, and radical, who showed me around Detroit in early November, put it this way: "At Dodge Main, there's a young black work-force being supervised by reactionary Polacks. Like, you've got a 63-year-old Pole bossing 25-year-old jitterbugs." A black worker at Dodge views the plant as a place where, "when white people were on those lines, they didn't use the watch. Only in the last four to five years has the speed-up come on the scene. Now black people are on the line, the watch thing is here."

DRUM's origins are somewhat obscure.

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A leader of a predominantly black caucus, the Concerned Members for Better Unionism, told me that "DRUM guys came to our meetings and argued that if we included white people in our thing, we were going to fail." A UAW spokesman thought the "original nucleus" came out of a group of Trotskyites and their followers, who, as he put it, "tried to sabotage ratification of the 1967 agreement in the plant." But, in fact, the one Trotskyite at Dodge's Main appears to be as isolated from DRUM as any other white, radical or not. General Baker, one of the nine Dodge founders of DRUM was described to me (by a young white radical) as "a working-class black in motion against the social system," and by a black worker at Dodge as "a real power, and no fool, though he can't present his thing." A bearish figure, the 26-year-old Baker has been tagged in the *Detroit Free Press* as a black nationalist and a member of the Afro-American Youth Association. He reportedly also played a role in Uhuru, a quasi-Maoist black group in Detroit. League functionaries John Watson, 26 and the father of two, and Mike Hamlin, 28 and currently a school bus driver, both worked on the *Detroit News* loading dock several years ago. They were active in CORE and seem to have been influenced by several of the radical splinter groups one still finds in Detroit, among them the followers of C. L. R. James.

"We'd been doing *Inner City Voice*," Watson told me in describing the genesis of DRUM, "and some of our people were working at Dodge." He described the Local as "rebellious anyway," and added that working conditions had deteriorated, and "there was a lot of racism, of all kinds—discrimination in promotion, in the skilled trades, and discrimination in the form of racial slurs."

Conditions at Dodge were affected by economic developments within Chrysler and the auto industry as a whole. Managerially incompetent and scandal-ridden, Chrysler seemed headed for the junkyards by 1960–61. The subsequent auto sales boom and the

skills of Lynn Townsend, now chief executive of the corporation saved Chrysler, and the company raised its share of the market from 10 percent in 1962 to 18 percent last year. Record earnings in 1968 amounted to \$290.7 million, or \$6.23 a share on sales of \$7.4 billion. Chrysler employment rose from roughly 75,000 in 1962 to slightly over 133,114 in 1966.¹ The 1960s were boom years for the industry. Domestic employment among the big three—General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler—rose from 693,186 in 1961 to 953,585 in 1966.

With four big plants in the Detroit area, Chrysler is a major inner-city employer. Chrysler emerged from World War II with the largest percentage of black employees in the industry, a lead it still holds. In 1946, 17 percent of Chrysler's 71,000 employees were black; 20 years later, 23.1 percent of its 133,114 employees were black. The rise and fall of Chrysler employment, therefore, is fairly crucial to Detroit's black community. For example, back in 1957, employment at four Chrysler Detroit plants was 45,584, including 9,242 blacks, or 20.3 percent. After a layoff, these plants employed in 1958 some 22,776 workers of whom 3,345 or 14.7 percent were black. Over the last six years, black employment in Detroit's auto plants has risen sharply. At Chrysler Local 7, roughly 65 to 70 percent of 7,638 members are black; 65 percent of the 4,012 UAW members at the Chrysler Eldon Gear and Axle plant are black; and roughly 60 percent of the production workers at Dodge Main are black.

Detroit itself, edging toward a black majority, is expected to be 50 percent black in 1970. Of the 350,000 members of the United Auto Workers in the Detroit area, which encompasses a good number of predominantly white suburbs, it is estimated

¹ At the time of my visit in November 1969, however, Dodge Main had begun to feel the recent pinch on Chrysler profits, a 25 percent plunge in first-quarter earnings. Employment, at roughly 11,000 in early November, was down from a peak of about 13,500 a year.

that upward of 40 percent are black.² There are other signs of change in the auto industry. A surprising portion of UAW membership is under 30. According to *Solidarity*, the UAW monthly, nearly 36 percent of UAW members at Chrysler are under 30; at GM, 33 percent, and at Ford, nearly 30 percent. More than 51 percent of Chrysler workers have less than five years' seniority; 41 percent at Ford, and 40 percent at GM.

Just seven years ago a worker had to have twenty years' seniority to work at Chrysler; today roughly 65 percent at Dodge Main have less than six years' seniority. Turnover is very high, especially among the young unmarried workers. According to industry estimates, some 46,000 new hires passed in and out of Detroit-area auto plants in 1968. According to one UAW chief steward at Dodge, representing some 400 workers, "Two hundred guys must've passed through my department since August." Some quit "cause the work is too hard," or on account of the "speedup," as older workers put it. Others are fired because they haven't caught on for a variety of reasons. One youth fired for absenteeism complained, "How could they miss me in a plant with 6,000 guys workin' in there?" In what amounts to an almost full-employment economy, some blue-collar youths are dropping in and out of industry pretty much the way their middle-class peers do at college—in response to mood, the need for bread, and parental push. The consequences of this new youthfulness within worker ranks is a dash of volatility to what is a Detroit mixture—black mili-

tancy, revolutionary adventurism, and working-class politics.

Detroit is a high-octane town. If the mixture is right, it doesn't take much to spark a wildcat walkout at its auto or supply parts plants. Despite automation, the assembly line has not changed its essential character as an engineered, mechanical pacer of man. Although I've been told that the auto companies find it more economical, even efficient, to add an hour or two of overtime rather than constantly fiddle with the speed of the line to get out the production, the assembly line remains the chief irritant in auto labor relations. William Gilbert, newly elected president of Chrysler Local 7, put it as well as anyone I talked with. "Production is up 63 percent over '49-'53, when there were 14,500 people in the plant. Now we've got 6,500. They call it 'advanced technology,' I call it speed-up." The line may move at 65 jobs an hour, he explained, "but a guy gets different work assignments two or three times a model. The engineers are constantly in there. They take away one task, and put two back." The assembly line is why auto workers retain the right to strike over work standards. This right is hedged in, a necessary precaution against constant disruption. Aggrieved workers must request permission from the local union for strike action on unresolved grievances, and the strike vote must be carried by a two-thirds majority. After such a vote, the international sends to the company "a five-day letter," giving the company five days to settle the grievance or else face a strike. Such strikes are a barometer of tensions within the industry, and significantly there have been more strikes over work standards this year than in some time.

Grievances pile up, and often a group of workers will take matters into their own hands by simply walking out when conditions have become intolerable and the settlement machinery seems to move too slowly. Chrysler was out to make 1968 a big year and the pressures at Dodge Main had in-

² Of the 1.7 million UAW members, about 25 percent, or 400,000 are black. There are two blacks on the 27-man executive board, and 80 black international representatives on a staff of 1,050. There are several black department heads. At conventions, blacks are probably proportionately represented, and perhaps even more so among officers in most locals where black workers exist in any number. Brendon Sexton, the UAW leadership training program director, is not far off the mark when he asserts, "I don't claim that black workers are equally represented at all levels in the union, but blacks have done better in the UAW than in any non-black national organization."

tensified to near-breaking by spring. The line was edged up from 49 units to 58 units an hour. The workers were in a feisty mood, and the Local leadership was off at the UAW convention in Atlantic City when there was some trouble in the bumper room on May 2, 1968. Workers there decided not to return to work after lunch. It was, as Watson told me, "more or less spontaneous." What role DRUM played is not exactly clear. "White women led that walkout," a black shop steward at Dodge Main told me. "Baker didn't picket." Nonetheless, when everybody went back to work, Dodge fired two white women and five black men, including Baker and a colleague, Bernie Tate. Baker allegedly blocked someone from entering the plant.

DRUM BEGAN AGITATION for the return of the black workers, distributing a four-page weekly outside the plant to black workers. In early July, DRUM, backed by "militant community elements," picketed Dodge Main, halting only black workers. The three-day demonstration crippled Dodge by a production loss of some 1,900 cars. Meanwhile, the union had secured the reinstatement of five of the seven discharged in May. Baker and Tate were left out.³ No one was fired for the July "disturbances."

The agitation at Dodge got attention elsewhere. Other black workers began forming similar groups in auto plants around Detroit, each demonstrating, if nothing else, the American fascination for alphabetizing—FRUM (Ford Revolutionary Union Movement); ELRUM (Eldon, Chrysler's only

gear and axle plant); JARUM (Jefferson Avenue); MARUM (Mack Avenue); and even CRUM (Chrysler Revolutionary Union Movement).⁴ Watson, then at Wayne University, was elected editor of the student paper, the *south end*. Emblazoned with the slogan, "One Class-Conscious Worker is Worth 100 Students," the paper was enlisted in the revolutionary struggle of black workers as embodied in DRUM. The New York *Guardian* ran a special supplement on "black worker insurgency in Detroit," featuring DRUM. A Black Federation of Labor announced itself in Chicago, and black "rank-and-file" groups announced their determination to form separate black unions within the Chicago and New York transit systems. Black Panther caucuses proclaimed successes among San Francisco Muni-Railway and auto workers at the Fremont, California, General Motors Plant. Black caucuses, different in character and tendency from the foregoing, were formed in UAW locals, the United Steelworkers, the Building Service Employees International Union, and in American Federation of Teachers locals. The United Black Brotherhood worked up a wildcat at the Mahwah, New Jersey, Ford assembly plant in late April, 1969.⁵ New

⁴This does not exhaust the list. There is GRUM (General Motors Revolutionary Movement) and HRUM, in Chicago, is for Harvester.

⁵The Mahwah walkout offers an interesting exercise in New Left fantasy. The *Guardian* hailed it as "a new stage of organization, activity and unity there . . . indicative of a new militancy, especially among black workers, all around the country and of new possibilities for radicals, black and white, to fight on class and race issues under workers' leadership." In the *Village Voice*, Jonathan Black wrote, "Most fundamentally, 906 [the UAW Local] does not represent the workers, especially the blacks," and concluded, after a couple of hedges, "At its best, Mahwah is providing an unusual laboratory in which students and workers can learn to cooperate in their struggles."

The wildcat was sparked by the United Black Brotherhood's skillful exploitation of a rumor that flowed out of a foreman's attempt to fire a black worker, allegedly calling him a "black mother fucker." White SDSers and Black Panthers then joined the wildcat picket line.

Now, what happens when a wildcat has the genuine backing of the workers in a plant and its

³ Baker, as they say, is still out of the industry. He is working, however, in a community program. Tate is back at work, but whether at Dodge or elsewhere I could not ascertain. The black workers I talked with at Dodge feel that Baker was "had" for his outside activities in the black community. They point out that one of the discharged white women had been disciplined twice for wildcat activity, yet was taken back. Baker, I was told, had a poor attendance record but no bad marks for wildcatting.

Left publications took up the beat, and hailed the onward march of the "Vanguard of the Black Revolution."

Back in the plants, however the "vanguard" elements were not faring so well. At least within the UAW, black caucuses did much better in a series of local elections held since DRUM appeared on the scene. Black auto workers were elected as presidents of Local 900 (Ford's Wayne plant), Local 47 (Chrysler Detroit Forge), Local 961 (Chrysler Eldon Gear), Local 7 (Chrysler), Local 51 (Plymouth), and at Local 1248 (Chrysler Mopar) *where 80 percent of the plant's 989 workers are white*. A black was elected vice-president of Briggs Local 212, the first time a black has held a top-level office in that local union. Within the plants there is a noticeable trend toward black representation; predominantly black districts, or departments, tend to elect black committeemen and black shop stewards.

Solidarity House, naturally, hailed these election results as a setback for DRUM and a victory for UAW internal democracy. The union leadership is divided on how to best handle DRUM and like developments. As spokesman for a hard line, UAW Secretary-Treasurer Emil Mazey blasted DRUM as "a handful of fanatics, who are nothing but black fascists . . . whose actions are an attempt to destroy this union." Last March the union executive board in a four-page

leaders are fired? Generally, one of several things: workers refuse to go back—"take all or none"; or they go back with the understanding that the punishment will be moderate; or they go back and continue to agitate and fight in various ways for the reinstatement of their fallen comrades. None of these things took place at Mahwah.

Why? Could it be that the black workers discovered that they had been had by the UBB, losing pay for no good reason? The black worker involved was not fired; the union stepped in and the erring foreman was removed from his job. As for the workers' real grievances, the walkout was a total loss.

Incidentally, the *Village Voice* refused to print a letter from the UAW's assistant regional director, Ed Grey, correcting errors of fact in Jonathan Black's account, and did so only after being picketed by members of Local 906.

letter to Detroit-area members warned: "The UAW . . . will not protect workers who resort to violence and intimidation with the conscious purpose of dividing our Union along racial lines." Mazey, who argues that no union has done more for black workers than the UAW, insists, "We can no longer tolerate the tactics of these young militants." Douglas A. Fraser, head of the UAW Chrysler Department, and Paul Schrade, Director of West Coast Region 6, among others, however, believe in keeping lines open, and acknowledge that blacks in the union have suffered inequities and indignities. The UAW has cracked down, at least verbally, on "militant violence" while in practice opening up staff jobs and political advancement to moderately militant blacks.

"The most potent argument you can use against extremists is that the system works," said Fraser, in talking about the recent local elections. "The victories by Negro candidates show that the democratic way allows for change." Some among the newly-elected blacks, however, are not at all happy about being touted as the UAW answer to black extremism. When I asked William Gilbert, president of Local 7, if he wanted to talk about developments within his Local, he said, rather sharply, "There was no publicity given to the fact that Negroes were kept out of the movement, in part due to caucuses backed by the International. If no coverage before, why now? Somebody must be feeling guilty."

In Local 7, as I found out later and as Leon England, another black officer of the Local, put it, "It took seven years to get what we got." "Back in 1963," England told me, "we recognized that if black workers don't move, the labor movement doesn't move." So far as I can tell from talking with a number of black UAW members, the caucuses building on this fundamental notion have been the successful ones. And it has not been easy. Aside from the arduous, in-plant political work and the plugging away at grievances and the like, there is the im-

patience of the young. England estimates that 60 percent of his Local membership is under 35. "They face much higher work standards than when we came in," he told me. "Because they're young, they're restless. It's a hard question to answer, when a young man says, 'You've been here 30 years and a white guy's here four and he's down at Solidarity House.' What kind of answer can I give that youngster? That I've just started to move this last year?"

DRUM indeed exercises considerable appeal among young black workers.⁶ When DRUM's "support cadre" picketed Chrysler's Eldon Gear and Axle plant, causing a shut-down, the company discharged 26 of the workers involved. Of these, according to Watson, four had at least 20 years of seniority. But the rest had only a year or less. Their youthfulness may, in part, explain DRUM's shrugging off the importance of local union elections. As Hamlin told me, "Our thrust is not getting workers to vote in union elections, per se." Both Watson and Hamlin, however, possess a pragmatic as well as a chiliastic bent. They readily concede the necessity of obtaining "relief" for black workers. And, in this instance, Hamlin quickly added, "We participated [in elections] as an organizational technique, and as a possible way of having some impact because there are things stewards can do that benefit workers on the line."

⁶ The Trade Union Leadership Conference, led by Horace Sheffield, still remains the largest and most powerful Detroit-wide black trade union group. It has some 3,000 members, who come from all unions but mostly the UAW. At its peak, TULC had over 7,000 members and helped elect Mayor Jerome Cavanaugh, despite opposition from Solidarity House. DRUM, of course, blasts the TULC as "a bunch of Uncle Toms," and TULC hasn't been noticeably successful among young black workers. TULC is not a caucus, and this may have hurt it among those now engaged in building black caucuses within local unions. Still, it is a factor, especially in Detroit politics, and significantly a young black activist, anti-DRUM and anti-UAW-Administration, did tell me that "some of the younger guys are getting interested in the TULC. It could be useful to us."

THE LEAGUE of Revolutionary Black Workers, in fact, figured as an organized caucus in only two elections—at Eldon Gear and Axle Local 961, and at Dodge Local 3. ELRUM endorsed three of the eight black winners in the election for the ten top Local 961 offices. Four ELRUM candidates lost, however, and Fred Halsey, ELRUM chairman, seeking a trusteeship, was the poorest vote-getter among the candidates. At Dodge Local 3, where presently four out of six full-time officers are black as well as 56 percent of the elected shop stewards, DRUM lost in two special elections, one for a trusteeship, won by a popular white worker, and the second for the vice-presidency, won by Andy Hardy, dubbed a "Tom" by DRUM, who defeated a white candidate in a run-off election by roughly 2,800 to 1,200. Today, I was told by Joe Davis, a shrewd Dodge Main black steward, "DRUM might muster 500 votes in a plant-wide election. It makes 'em powerful when you realize that 2,000 votes can win the Presidency." It was his feeling that DRUM could be "a spoiler" for the militant, predominantly black anti-administration caucus in the next local elections.

Perhaps the question is moot, for DRUM may forego electoral, "reformist" activity altogether. According to the January 23, 1969, issue of the *south end*,

The election [for trustee in Local 3] was still a significant victory for the black workers. It was their contention that the unions are inherently undemocratic, and that even with the overwhelming support of the workers, the union bureaucracy cannot be broken through peaceful, democratic methods. As a result, thousands of black workers have gained practical experience in a reform movement, they have seen that reform is impossible, and are therefore rapidly joining the revolutionary caucuses being set up by DRUM.

But in fact *DRUM*, the weekly distributed at Dodge Main, has ceased publication. The office of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers is "temporarily" closed "for paint-

ing and redecoration.” Watson and Hamlin are operating out of a West Side community organization store-front, and have taken up other, additional causes. The last Detroit-wide Revolutionary Black Workers demonstration aimed at the UAW, on November 9, 1969, drew roughly a hundred persons, some from the plants, some from Wayne University, and some from the black community.

This does not quite fit in with the claim for a black revolutionary upsurge. Numerically, my estimate is that the League’s hard-core hovers around a hundred young blacks, the majority of whom are either community people or students at Wayne. Followers fluctuate, of course. One League-summoned “mass meeting” drew seven people; while another shut down Dodge-Main. At the present writing, however, I doubt that DRUM, *et al.*, could shut down any plant in Detroit. The League is, at best, a ginger for other black caucuses, and at worst a disruptive minority among black workers.

Still, it won’t do to write off the League, as some in Solidarity House are inclined to do. It may yet recruit a real cadre, or even build a constituency among young black auto workers in Detroit. The labor market has been tight, but there are signs that President Nixon’s war-on-inflation is having an impact. Some of those hard-core unemployed so eagerly sought by the auto companies over the last year have been let go. If auto production is pared back, young auto workers will be hit hardest. Conceivably, the League might develop a program and a thrust that would appeal to these workers. Exactly what it might do is unclear—attack the UAW and/or the motor companies, disrupt production by mass picketing, hit at high seniority workers, march on city hall for jobs? While the last recession did not exactly produce a revolutionary mood in Detroit or the country-at-large, it is true that the temper of the black community is radically different, edgier and more political. At the same time, more black workers have the

seniority entitling them to union-won benefits—both as cushions against lay-offs and as guarantees of jobs. They aren’t likely to take attacks on their union lightly. How this will ultimately affect the kinds of agitation the League can carry on is a question. Significantly, DRUM’s setbacks in this last period came, in the main, from the older and more stable groups of black workers. At Dodge-Main, I was repeatedly told, DRUM’s unqualified attack on *all* the black stewards and committeemen as “Uncle Toms” put off a considerable number of workers who might otherwise have been more receptive to its message.

The League, no doubt, suffers from those internal contradictions that plague all parties dedicated to “revolution” while agitating for “relief” from present wrongs. Programatically, DRUM has been criticized by some UAW people for raising so-called “middle-class demands.” At Dodge, after pointing out that 90 percent of all the foremen, 99 percent of the general foremen, and 100 percent of all plant superintendents were white, DRUM demanded 50 black foremen, 10 black general foremen, and 3 black superintendents. This may have amounted to a demand that all white supervision must go but it also reflected DRUM’s immediate goals—“relief” for black workers—and related to their ultimate revolutionary aim of a workers’ state. “He [the black foreman] would have to be accountable to us,” Hamlin told me, in discussing this point. “Realistically, I know he wouldn’t, but at least the verbal racist shit would stop.”

Hamlin, at least, envisages “a workers’ state [where] workers have control over management,” and I gather on the Chinese rather than the Yugoslavian model. Presumably, since demands are also “educational,” such DRUM demands as the appointment of “a black brother as head of the board of directors of Chrysler Corporation” are related to its view of what ought to be. Most of the original demands, naturally, relate to the Dodge situation—for “all black doctors

and 50 percent black nurses" in the medical center; that all plant protection guards be black; that "every time a black worker is removed from plant premises he be led by a black brother"; that black workers "fired on trumped-up racist charges" be rehired with back pay; that a rank-and-file committee investigate grievances, etc. Others point a direction—that "all black workers immediately stop paying union dues," and that "the two hours' pay that goes into union dues be levied to the black community to aid in self-determination for black people."

The League of Revolutionary Black Workers has enlarged DRUM demands to urge the firing of Walter P. Reuther and for the election of a black UAW president, a 50 percent black executive board and staff. It wants a cut in union dues and an end to the check-off—"progressive in the 1930s, today it prevents workers from disciplining poor union leadership." At the same time, the UAW "must" fight against speed-up, for a five-hour day and four-day week, and for a doubling of the wages of all production workers. Last but not least, the UAW should call a general strike to end the Vietnam War, to end all taxes imposed on workers, to boost taxes on industrial profits to make up the difference, and to force the reallocation of all federal monies spent on defense "to meet the pressing needs of the black and poor populations of America."

CURRENTLY, according to Watson, the League is concentrating on "developing a more comprehensive, analytical program and a more disciplined organization." To recruit a cadre, or to begin building a base, however, one expects to see some educational apparatus. But there just doesn't seem to be any—no paper, no pamphlets, no classes. All this, of course, may be an Old Left hangup, or it may be going on out of sight, away from prying white eyes. Watson did say, "We're moving on a lot of fronts,

man." The League, as he said, "is a full-time operation. All that shit—organizing meetings, developing education classes, and raising funds—got to be done. We consider ourselves a total revolutionary organization."

No doubt. But young workers who want to know how grievances can be fought and won, for example, are going to go where those lessons are taught. And, so far as I can tell, they go to the union. Within the UAW, too, they learn how to caucus, to be political. For a radical sect to counter this takes some doing, not to mention dedicated passion.

Watson, Hamlin, and others in the League have this in large measure. So the question is: can it be sustained? There are a great many pulls—to other forms of black militancy, to Milton Henry's black Republic of New Africa, and to the Black Panthers. Incidentally, Panther Chief of Staff David Hilliard, in the April 24, 1969, *Black Panther*, claimed that a majority within DRUM and FRUM are Panther party members. Under the new line of "a united front against fascism," the Panthers, to quote their paper again, "after having concentrated previously on community affairs" are turning "toward an alliance with labor." As Kenny Horsten, Director of the Black Panther caucus at the Fremont GM plant,⁷ put it,

We've got 2 enemies; the union and the corporation, in that order, and only when we recognize that the enemy is within can we effectively combat the corporation, the power structure. We can't at this time, combat the corporation because the union leadership is like a brick wall between the workers and the corporation. . . . So we have to form more caucuses and a revolutionary movement, so that we can break down this

⁷ There are about 5,000 workers in the Fremont GM plant, of whom 30 to 35 percent are black and Mexican-American in equal proportions. Horsten, who has worked in the plant six years and formed his caucus in late 1968, ran for board-member-at-large in recent local elections, getting about 500 votes where he needed 800-900 to win.

wall and then we can proceed to move against the corporation with the might of the union behind us—and not in front of us.

Not surprisingly, there have been meetings between the DRUM people and the Panthers. As a party, the Panthers possess the ideology, however rudimentary, that could sustain in-plant DRUM-type agitators. The Panther-Communist party alliance, in the places where old-time Communist workers are still to be found, might provide certain kinds of know-how. But there are differences between the DRUMmers and the Panthers. These surfaced, according to reports carried in the *Guardian* (April 26, 1969) and the *People's World* (same date), at a meeting held in Oakland on April 19, 1969.⁸ There Watson argued that white racism both in the companies and the unions necessitates "a strong, independent organization among black workers." This was in line with a League demand: "Recognition of the League of Revolutionary Black Workers and its affiliates as the official spokesman for black workers on the local and national level with the power to negotiate black demands on the company and the union and their power to call officially sanctioned strikes." But Watson also added that he thought black caucuses in white-controlled unions were largely ineffective. *When asked if he were advocating separate unions for black workers, Watson answered yes.*⁹ Masai asserted the primacy of the

class struggle, saying that "a degree of self-determination" was necessary for black workers as the most oppressed section of the working class, but also asserting Panther opposition to splitting the international proletariat. Seale, according to the *Guardian*, "left open the possibility of caucuses within unions to fight racism." Horston apparently is pushing for an alliance with the League, and it may come about. But ideologists among blacks as among whites are prone to this kind of grouping, regrouping, splintering, and resplintering. At the moment, the Panthers are for a united front, and apparently the DRUMmers haven't decided.

Black workers today are going through a development *somewhat* analogous to that experienced by many workers in the 1930s. They are gaining majorities or developing significant minority blocs within certain plants, local unions, industries and international unions. They want representation, and as Leon England told me, "We intend to use everything we have to further the rights of the black man in this union. We want to get him more solidified in it."

Militancy obviously has its uses. DRUM was a panic button, and both the union and the company reacted. More blacks are now on the staffs of both institutions than before DRUM made its appearance. When you are seeking representation within existing institutions, it is sometimes useful to threaten the building of a separate, new institution—especially if someone else raises that specter for you, so that if convenient you can repudiate it later.

At a time when black workers are going through an awakening of ethnic class-consciousness, it is unreasonable to expect the emergence of only moderate expressions of

⁸ The differences in reporting were interesting. The *People's World* played up unity and made a point of "the predominantly white audience" that came to hear Watson, Panther theorist Masai, Hilliard, and Bobby Seale. The *Guardian* did not mention the color of the audience, but did bring out the political differences between the League and the Panthers.

⁹ In an interview with me, Watson hedged on the issue of separatist, or dual, unions. "We're driving to organize masses of black workers into independent labor organizations, which are political." Prodded a little, he added, "Tactically, it depends on the situation whether you move to take over a union, or whether you move organizationally outside or around it." (The League has backed an independent black effort to organize hospital workers in Detroit.) At another point, he said,

"just because we don't see unions as the only salvation of workers doesn't mean we're going to ignore them and what they mean." In sum, Watson told me: "My thing is, we're not concerned with institutions. We are concerned with the working class and whatever ways we can get that working class organized, that's the way we're going to move."

their essential demand—recognition. During the 1930s, workers played off the CIO against the AFL, and radical parties and sects flourished at the fringes of the mainstream of the unions. It is a tribute to these workers—and one should remember black and white workers did build together—that their institutions are now absorbing, not without conflict or pain, aggressively militant black caucuses. No less than white, black workers want what Samuel Gompers so tersely described as “more.” It doesn’t

seem likely that they are going to jettison existing ways—collective bargaining, for one—or existing institutions—unions, for another—just in order to satisfy an abstract ideology of black expressionism. Especially, since it now appears that they are now making their own mark within the unions.

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A sequel to this article, concerning the rise of black groups within the unions, will appear in our next issue.—ED.

Stanley Plastrik

Confrontation in Pittsburgh

THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY, as anyone knows who has tried to build himself even the tiniest summer place, is one of the most backward in the country. Obsolete building codes, “political peddling,” restrictive practices of builders and contractors, the practices of the building trades unions—these are but a few of the problems. Present building methods are obsolete, and there is strong resistance to those new materials and techniques which alone could bring down the costs. And in most cities there is a tacit understanding between contractors, union bosses, and political figures to maintain the status quo in this industry which is so sorely in need of reform.

The building industry absorbs about \$90 billion dollars a year, of which roughly one-third comes out of public funds. Apart from the sources of funding, there are two power

centers in the industry: the builders and contractors, who enjoy some of the highest profit rates in American industry—and the unions. There are thousands of contractors (many of them small, often merely individual builders)—and the unions, which represent more than two dozen crafts and thus have control over skilled labor. The building trades unions have long deemed it advantageous to keep skilled labor in short supply. Therefore, tens of thousands of workers have been denied union membership and the unions’ financial and other benefits. Now these nonunion workers and small builders—blacks, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and poor whites—are forced to eke out a marginal existence through building small suburban and rural homes.

Not only do the construction unions hold to their strategy of keeping in short supply the number of available workers with a given skill. They also insist that each craft must be employed on every construction job; if one craft is left out, the others also will stay away.

The writer wishes to express his thanks to Mrs. Tova Tive of Pittsburgh for her invaluable help in preparing this report; the views expressed are of course his own.

Whenever there is a shortage of a given skill—rather than training new local workers who might belong to one or another minority—workers will be brought in from other sections of the country. (This recently has become a major issue in New York's public housing program.)

Pittsburgh (with a population of 650,000, going down rapidly as the white exodus continues, and a black population of 17 percent or over 100,000) needs, in addition to new construction, rehabilitation of 8,500 one-family homes and 35,000 apartment-building units. By using the so-called modular system of construction—the stacking of prefabricated rooms or entire apartments on top of one another, like huge boxes—apartments and replacement rooms now can be built inside a factory or on an assembly line. This form of revolutionary building uses all-steel wall systems, studs, and frames. The first four-unit prototype was erected on a site in approximately three hours—after delivery on flatbed trucks—erected and ready for occupancy. By sliding the prefab units into a steel skeletal framework, these units can be stacked into low-cost housing units, or luxury dwellings, town houses, and even high-rise apartments. Jones & Laughlin, United States Steel, the Aluminum Company of America are all deeply involved in experiments with modular construction units. One could add many more details all leading to the conclusion that the industry is poised on the edge of a technological revolution capable of resolving the chronic housing shortage within a few years' time. Among the results of such a "modular building revolution" would be the fact that significant financing and interest savings are possible as construction time would be dramatically reduced.

Were the building unions receptive toward this revolution, they would realize the advantages to be gained. Minority groups, now fighting for union membership, could be drawn into a prefab and modular work force, two-thirds of which would consist of previously unskilled workers now rapidly being

trained to semi-skilled status. Michael Diamond, the executive director of the Bidwell Cultural and Training Center in Pittsburgh—a training program center for "self-help," financed by the Richard A. Mellon Foundation—strongly believes that prefab, modular, and other new construction technologies are part of the answer to the problem of getting minority workers into the industry. The Bidwell Center is training blacks to work with prefab methods, and a 78-unit low-middle-income housing development in a black fringe area of Pittsburgh will employ this group of trainees when their program is completed.

It is safe to conclude that any massive construction in the future will have to face up to the challenge of this technology. How shall massive construction work be undertaken? Will the new methods and materials, including a further breakdown of job specialization, be given full play? How shall we create a labor force equipped to meet the demands of this technology? What will happen to craft unions unwilling or incapable of expanding fast enough to supply workers or meet the demands of minority group workers? These are a few of the questions recently posed in Pittsburgh in what amounted to a rehearsal of the issues before the industry.

THANKS TO nationwide publicity, formation of the Black Construction Coalition (BCC) in Pittsburgh is a familiar story. Not so familiar is the event that set the BCC in motion: the black-run training program known as Operation Dig initiated by a militant, black, "natural-born" leader, Nate Smith. Mr. Smith, a former professional fighter who 18 years ago miraculously had gained entry into the then all-white Pittsburgh Local No. 66 of the Operating Engineers' Union, had a dream: to teach other blacks how to operate heavy equipment, road-construction machinery, and then get them union cards and onto jobs. He recruited 70 of "the toughest guys I could find"—half with police records, 40 percent on welfare, poolroom

habitues, demoralized older hard-core unemployed, etc. Then by sheer personal determination, and even though half of the original trainees dropped out and had to be replaced, Nate Smith turned them into heavy-equipment operators who were guaranteed journeymen membership in the Operating Engineers' Union.

This 12-month training program was costly, but it will ultimately pay for itself through the life earnings of those who went through it. The Labor Department, contractors, union officials, local antipoverty personnel pitched in to help provide financing. A weekly salary of \$100 acted as a "carrot" to keep most of the trainees coming; Mr. Smith's tough but honest (although often criticized) method of training was a kind of "stick." For example, the first week's training consisted of meeting Smith at 7 AM every morning at the local bus stop.

In the end, 90 men received their union cards and an opening to a new life at \$5.00 per hour. "Dig is the best thing that ever happened to me in my life," 42-year-old Carl Richardson, now working as a roadgrader, is quoted as saying. Before, he had earned \$2 an hour as a laborer. Now, more than 500 men are on a waiting list for Dig No. 2, stymied by lack of funds and by conflicts within the black and union movements. Mr. Smith told us that his objective with Dig No. 2 would be the training, in a two-year program, of 110 blacks in bricklaying, carpentry, electrical work, and other construction trades. His approach is a simple empirical one: train the men but first get a union commitment admitting them to membership when training is completed. At this moment, the future of Dig No. 2 is doubtful. Dig No. 1 was a relatively unsophisticated program, and one charge made against it is that it cannot be repeated in Pittsburgh or elsewhere. Whether this criticism is true or not, Dig No. 1 did show what can be done with will and determination. Can it now be succeeded by bigger and more sophisticated Digs?

Not if the building unions have their way. Perhaps the key issue in the struggle between black groups and the unions is, who shall control the training process? The unions, insisting that apprenticeship and training remain solely under their domination, are adamant in their refusal to admit to membership large groups of blacks who claim they already have adequate training. The face presented to the blacks by most of the construction unions is far from amiable; it is often positively stony. These unions have built up high wage scales and an elaborate structure of job-related benefits, mostly by a strict rationing of admissions. In Pittsburgh the Black Construction Coalition (BCC) was launched to crack this policy and its major institutional defender, the Building Trades Council. The BCC was composed of Operation Dig, the Bidwell Training Center, and almost every other black organization in the city, with the local NAACP as spearhead; it also received wide support from traditionally liberal and radical white organizations. Charles C. Robb, editor of the *Pittsburgh Point*, a local weekly with a liberal appeal, explains why the BCC won quick support among Pittsburgh blacks:

They have good reason to fight. In no city is there a more clear-cut case of discrimination by the building trades unions. There are twenty-six such unions in the Pittsburgh area, with a total membership of about 32,000. About 2,200 of these are black, or just under 7 percent. However, the totals include the Teamsters, which boasts a 24 percent black membership this year, and the Construction General Laborers Union with a 49 percent black membership. When these two noncraft unions are excluded, the percentage of black journeymen in the building trades unions drops to about 1.5 percent.

—*The Nation*, September 22, 1969

PITTSBURGH'S BLACK COALITION spearheaded a nationwide movement of blacks (Boston, Cleveland, Chicago, etc.) and succeeded in drawing attention to itself on a

national scale. There is no need to reiterate the details of the demonstrations that took place and drew counterdemonstrations by white construction workers; the issue was sharply drawn, violence broke out on several occasions, and more than once downtown Pittsburgh was close to a bloodbath. The worst moment came after Pittsburgh's Mayor closed down public construction projects for a short period, during which negotiations were supposed to be carried out. The coalition had put forward its demands: a minimum of 1,130 jobs—excluding laborers—with union cards; within two years, a minimum of 40 percent black membership in each craft union; 20 percent of the trainees to be recruited from among men with prison records; training programs limited to eight months, and, finally, the qualifications for journeyman status to be determined by a committee which would include Black Coalition representatives. These proposals were considered negotiable, not final. In the impasse that now exists, the BCC continues to hold fast to these demands as its preliminary bargaining position.

Impasse is the word to describe the present state of affairs. After the demonstrations the Mayor brought both sides to three-and-one-half weeks of daily, and thus far fruitless, negotiations. Pittsburgh had never before known such tension. It is basically a union town (there are thousands of black steel workers), and still a small city with a degree of communal harmony that has long since vanished in places like New York.

The demonstrators had much support among the people. Except for radicalized middle-class whites, however, this support did not reach the point of activity. According to one BCC leader who attended the negotiation sessions, the unions "conceded nothing," bringing the talks to a state of collapse. Debates still go on as to who walked out on whom. Michael Dismond, of the Bidwell Cultural and Training Center, holds the unions responsible for the failure of all past negotiations and for their failure to resume

them. He charges the union leadership with "racism," and with proposing to maintain a labor scarcity in order to maintain high wage rates. The unions reply by citing "impossible demands" and a black desire to bypass their apprenticeship training programs.

All who took part in the latest round of negotiations agree they were good meetings (if often heated and violent) in the sense that basic issues were discussed at length. The blacks talk about unacceptable "token offers," about the stubbornness of the unions and the contractors, and about the issue of control over the training procedure as the main roadblock to progress. A minority of the black negotiators, particularly Nate Smith of Operation Dig, sounds an interesting note. Without for a moment joining forces with the white-dominated union locals, they feel that an agreement, perhaps only a preliminary agreement, might have been forthcoming but for internal divisions among the blacks who were present.

This raises an important if delicate issue: there is a clear difference between blacks who come out of the working-class and ghetto communities and the middle-class black spokesmen representing various Negro organizations such as the NAACP. Probably an unavoidable area of misunderstanding exists here, which shows through in spontaneous and somewhat angry recriminations. There is Nate Smith's comment, for example, that "they [the official black leaders] act just like whites; they come down and try to tell us what to do. . . ." White union leaders often appeal to the black worker

Apprentices

"As of 1968 only 3 percent of registered apprentices were Negroes. And, according to a Bureau of Labor Statistics study, if the Negro share of the construction work force were proportionate to the black share of the population, there would be 37,000 more Negro carpenters, 45,000 more laborers, 97,000 more mechanics, 82,000 more metal craftsmen and 112,000 more construction foremen."

—New York Times, September 14, 1969

representative on the other side of the table as an ally against black middle-class leaders who, they point out, know little or nothing about the construction industry (least of all about working in it) and who, of course, will never operate a bulldozer or lay a brick.

On the other hand, says Mr. Dismond, the present white union leadership rose from the ranks by superior muscle and brawn, not precisely the requirement for facing problems of the new technology. The short-run interest of the black now is first of all a job, but he also keeps in mind his future in the industry. This involves training, status and membership.

We confront here a complex clash of personalities, differing work attitudes, and, above all, differing social goals. Especially acute is the training issue, since educated blacks with some experience in training people are convinced that briefer training periods are possible, that the new technology can compartmentalize most of the old craft skills, if not replace them with assembly-line techniques. Needless to say, in insisting upon maintaining control over apprentice training, the union leadership also insists on clinging to its drawn-out training techniques which are central to its approach to the industry.

THIS ATTITUDE is echoed up and down the entire labor movement, starting with George Meany who frequently expresses his conviction that there aren't "enough" skilled black workers anyway. (During the demonstrations in Pittsburgh, the pride of the construction trade marched to City Hall chanting "Wallace in '72" and pausing along the way to complain that the Pittsburgh Pirates had too few white players.)

The annual convention of the AFL-CIO construction unions this year was dominated by a smug and self-congratulatory tone that could only discourage those hoping for changes. The threat of federal government action in the form of compulsory arbitration and mandatory wage-price controls, to say

nothing of the urgency of a program to meet the approaching revolution in mass production technology, seemed not to disturb the Executive Council of the AFL-CIO's Building and Construction Trades Department. Their unanimously-adopted statement on equal employment opportunity reaffirmed previous pledges to increase Negro employment in the industry, but without any change in procedures or policies. This statement refers to the fact that where in 1960 census statistics showed that nonwhites made up 2.5 percent of the 85,000 apprenticeships in the country, in the first half of 1968 almost 10 percent of the 26,156 newly-enrolled apprentices came from minority groups. (How this affected the percentage of the total number of apprentices is not made clear.) Reiterating its well-known standpoint that union locals in the industry should invite applications of qualified minority journeymen for membership, the real thrust of the statement is directed against government intervention, particularly in the form of the so-called Philadelphia Plan:

The Executive Council of the Building and Construction Trades Department is of the considered view that the failure of the communications industry and the government to maintain an objective attitude is inflammatory and prejudicial to the sound and proper solution of the racial issue in the building and construction industry and other segments of American life.

We might note that the Revised Philadelphia Plan—issued on June 27, 1969, by Assistant Secretary of Labor Arthur Fletcher as a more vigorous attempt to bring black workers into the trade—is considered "tokenism" and insufficient by most black leaders since, among other weaknesses, it is applicable only to seven unions. (The Revised Philadelphia Plan requires contractors doing business with the government to accept a "definite standard" of minority employment in seven trades according to flexible criteria such as the current extent of minority participation in the trade, availability of minor-

ity workers, need for training programs in the area, etc.)

Still more serious, the President's 75 percent cutback in federal funding of building and construction (and the Philadelphia Plan applies only to contractors doing business with the government) undermines any practical effect it may have had. Finally, it is under challenge in the courts and in the federal hierarchy itself as an unlawful quota system, proscribed by the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

There is also the controversial matter of the Model Cities Act of 1966, which has scarcely gotten off the ground and whose major weakness is that, while offering the possibility of training to the black worker, it does not and cannot assure him that he will receive a journeyman's union card in the craft. Once a Model Cities project is completed (and mighty few have even begun!) the black worker may be right back where he began, further embittered by his knowledge of job opportunities he has been denied. The Pittsburgh BCC, along with similar movements in Boston and Chicago, places little stock in federal schemes such as the Philadelphia Plan.

In addition to the conventional answer that the unions are doing all they possibly can to enlarge their percentage of black card holders, the union leadership tends to be highly critical of black leadership—that is, when it admits that this leadership exists. The usual attitude is that no real black leadership is available with whom the unions can properly negotiate, as black leaders are “unable to say no” to their own constituency; also, that movements such as the BCC are “irresponsible,” without structure, and thrive on threats of violence and intimidation. Some officials in Pittsburgh have charged the BCC with containing “gangster elements.” Finally, much objection is made to “extravagant” demands by militant blacks as to members to be accepted, job percentages, etc. And the BCC's demand that 25 percent of newly admitted black trainees and journeymen be drawn from a pool of black men with prison

records is considered particularly outrageous by white unionists. Yet, if any group needs a special helping hand it is the black ex-cons! Here we touch upon a severe difficulty in negotiations; each issue raises a host of related questions and seems to challenge and menace the established union system. Little wonder that the often aggressive demands and actions of the Black Construction Coalition are frequently seen as a demonstration against the union movement.

There is a thoroughly adamant feeling in the unions and among the builders' associations against black control of training programs. “If the association is to participate in any program, it will insist on professional management,” declared Mr. O. H. Martison, a Master Builders official. This opinion is echoed by the unions. But black leaders like Nate Smith insist that black control is essential if efforts to train hard-core jobless blacks are to succeed. “You train men as you see fit, not according to rules laid down by some guy who was never poor.” There are any number of black spokesmen who consider control over the training process the most important aspect of their movement.

WHERE DO WE GO from here? It is now several months since negotiations broke off, when the Black Coalition refused to discuss an industry offer proposing a limited number of black jobs over an indefinite time period. Both sides have hardened their stance. A new round of agitation, confrontation, demonstrations, and—eventually—negotiation is in the making. The Pittsburgh Building and Construction Trade Council withdrew from the Allegheny County Labor Council after Gilbert Teitel, president of the Council, spoke with some sympathy about the black cause. All sides are clearly unhappy but see no immediate way out.

The dangers of a prolonged impasse are obvious: a growing embitterment and drawing-apart of all parties. Bayard Rustin is right when he suggests that, regardless of who is right or wrong, such a situation tends

to undermine intelligent leadership on all sides and to play into the hands of racial extremists. The Negro community, he adds, may find itself at war with the labor movement, a disaster for all. One form this desperation takes is in loose and irresponsible talk about "independent black unions" that will deal with black builders and compete contractually with white unions.*

Last October the Pittsburgh BCC organized a meeting of black leaders from similar coalitions across the country. There was some talk, especially from leaders in Detroit, about "our own unions," and motions to consider the formation of a nationwide black union were adopted. Whatever the strength of such groups, such talk has undesirable consequences. The federal government, builders' associations, finance organizations, etc. would like nothing more than dual unions to tear apart entrenched craft unions. A violent internecine war would break out between blacks and unions, with disastrous results for all. Most responsible black lead-

* A far better way of coping with this problem is the apprenticeship program for various skilled trades set up in New York City by the Workers' Defense League in cooperation with the unions. This program seems to be a model of its kind, and with greater funding it could become a major contribution.

ers, such as Michael Dismond, oppose separate black unions, but acknowledge that the issue may emerge in the future and split the coalitions. Dismond's aim is to get blacks into the existing unions and to change their internal structure.

There must be a facing-up on all sides to often cruel facts before any headway is possible. We have already suggested the first reality to be faced: the technological revolution now underway in building. All programs for America—Freedom Budget, Democratic party platform, etc.—call for mass construction of housing, schools, hospitals, public transport. How can the need be met by antiquated unions, incapable either of expanding rapidly enough to do the job or to increase the job market?

The second reality to be faced is the danger of government intervention (reactionary in itself and evidence that the unions have failed) in the collective bargaining process. This could apply to hiring halls, seniority systems, and apprenticeship programs and standards. If the building trades cannot bring about the necessary changes themselves, these changes indeed may be forced upon them by the federal authorities. The unions would then have only themselves to blame.

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Society of the Absurd

A Look at the New South

THE SOUTH has continued to change. The Klan and Citizens' Councils were on the wane, were less relevant as the society seemed increasingly in a state of flux from the effect of new and contradictory forces at work on it. All the Southern impulses to irrationality were summoned by the state of flux, and, appropriate to the age, often found expression in the absurd. There were scenes, for example, like that at the end-of-the-year "patriotic" program at a fashionable public school in Atlanta where the son and daughter of Martin Luther King, Jr., and the daughter of his chief stalwart, Ralph Abernathy, were enrolled. Their dark faces shining out in the closeness of choral grouping among a sea of little white ones, the children were happily singing what the music teacher had introduced as a favorite song of Abraham Lincoln's: "Dixie." The Reverend Mr. Abernathy, shaking his head and grinning, remarked: "Well if it was good enough for Abraham Lincoln, it ought to be good enough for us." Clearly, we might wander at length in a wryly laughing world of such anecdotage on the Southern anthem alone (the football game crowd in Florida standing as the band plays it, a "liberal" white couple refusing to stand and being berated by the little old lady behind them saying: "After all, when I am up North and they play the 'Star Spangled Banner,' I always stand").

A whole book of black humor might be devoted to the psychology of the semantics of race, all the symbolism and surrealism.

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The "common" sort of white Southerner has employed "nigger" unabashedly; "nice" people in the past said "colored." *Negra* was an affectation for them, an attempt (often difficult, as though the tongue were weighted) to say it right. One might argue, in the way of white Southerners, with relish for deep involvement in superficiality and with great, raw insensitivity, that "*Negra*" is the natural way the Southern speech patterns would form the word "Negro," as they transform "tomato" into "t'mater," and in remote places, "matuh" (as in "matuh san'wich"). Negroes use "nigger" among themselves—as a term of approbation, or jokingly. "Nigger, git on out of that car," a harried husband says to his wife during the labor and apprehension of moving into a white neighborhood, both of them breaking up their tension with a long laugh at what the anguished, new white neighbors might have made of that.

The new legislation and changing racial patterns of the 1960s threw the average white Southerner's pronunciation of the word into wild disarray. In former times, each had his own word for it and stuck to it—"nigger," "*Negra*," "colored," "Nee-grow." But with the changes, the same white person would use all the terms in the course of a 10- or 15-minute discussion. "Now I've never had anything against the colored. . . . Th' niggers in this town never have given any trouble. . . . Why, we've even got a Negro on the city council. . . . I don't know what it is th' *Negras* really want. Do you?" This occurred so often in interviews and casual conversations that it clearly emerged as a vivid indication of the ambivalences of individual white attitudes and the regional white mood.

"Black" or "blacks," not much in usage in the modern South by whites, was once offensive to Negroes as "darky" and "colored" were not. In the era of black awareness, Negro ambiguity was to be noted in the interchangeability of their use of the terms, "black" and "Negro."

"Negra" is most offensive to middle-class Negroes, not without their own Southern propensity for the superficial. They encountered it often at those middle-class gatherings where, falteringly, whites of moderate and even liberal instincts with little previous contact with the "better sort" of Negro attempt to enter the "interracial" world ("Th' class of niggers we got around here" was a stock-in-trade explanation for lack of Negro advancement in repressive areas by more or less moderate leadership acquainted only with menials of their experience.) Negroes enjoy setting them straight. "You know how to say *knee*," slapping the knee. "And you know how children *grow*," with a rapid upshooting motion of the hands. "Well, just put them together and you have—Knee-Grow." Sometimes the lesson was delivered privately; most enjoyably, it would come as an interruption to a speech (urging, no doubt, good race relations, or some specific racial reform). A celebrated instance of this, part of the folklore, was when Mrs. Constance Baker Motley, in one of her many appearances in Southern federal courts as counsel for the Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., of the NAACP (before she became a federal district judge in New York City), delivered the lesson to a United States District judge in Mississippi.

ABSURDITY has always been at the core of the whole racial situation in the South, and this has not been lost on most Negro and white Southerners. Their ability to laugh at it and at themselves from both sides of the color line has been at once one of the most subtle, elusive (hard not merely to describe but even to suggest), and at the same time

most magnificent of their survival mechanisms. The Southerner's laugh—dry, ironic, deeply communicative—stands aside from all his embroilment in evil and human complexity; it asserts humanity and comments on self, the situation, and the world at large, on the tragedy of life. The second-generation white leader of a sleepy, unprepossessing little town lets his laughter resound all through the slurred pronunciation of his words as he praises his hamlet beyond all credibility (his and yours and you both know it) for its peacefulness, self-content, good race relations (never any trouble out of the 49 percent plus Negro population, as debased as any in the South), sound resistance to the encroachment of new industry upon the fine old one (sawmilling), and so on. Talking at dusk, outlined against an unbelievable sky of purple clouds behind him to the horizon, colors vivid in the grass and bushes and flowers, he gives a virtuoso performance with his Southern propensity for enjoyment of words, the rhythms and complexities of speech, with little regard for meaning, oral tradition itself rendered absurd. He shouts; he whispers dramatically; he takes his hat off to use as a prop, and leans his large head back. An extraordinarily tall man, with a solemn, respectable, official's face (belied only by the ironic turn of his mouth and the unruliness of his black forelock), he takes three steps backward and runs at you with the point he is making: "Th' niggers have got to quit lookin' backward, feelin' sorry for themselves. . . ." (This was preceded by an endless digression into the vicissitudes of the town, the state, and the South during and after the Civil War, ostensibly the explanation of why it was impossible in the past for the whites of such a town to help out their Negro fellow citizens as, he implies, they are doing in this happy time.) He hawks, he spits carefully into the grass. He begins to build a poetic image of total absurdity, only his intonations acknowledging that thin line he walks between humor and tragedy with sober argumentation:

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Why, we've always been peaceful here. Never any trouble between the races. We've always gotten along fine together. Why, I can remember—do you remember during the Depression when they used to drop turkeys out of airplanes, th' merchants did, to drum up business? You never saw that? I have many a time. Drop 'em out, and they'd come flopping down and roost up in th' top of trees. I've seen 'em up in that very tree over yonder on th' courthouse lawn. And great crowds down below waitin' to git 'em, niggers and whites. And they'd go after them turkeys, go streamin' after 'em and not fightin' each other at all—climb up them trees, and tear those turkeys apart, limb from limb, a nigger holdin' to a leg, a white man to a wing. Not fighting. Never any trouble between 'em.

He puts his hat back on his head and lights a cigar, allowing, in the utter stillness of twilight in such a town, the vision of interracial harmony to sink in. Then, finally, he laughs and then he says, looking around at the terrible little town: "Well, I tell you what. If th' niggers take this town, they ain't goin' to have *much*. There's some of us would be happy to get it off our backs."

The encounter with such a figure offers a sense of America as it once must have been, Mark Twain's America, de Tocqueville's, where all undiscovered and waiting in each look-alike hamlet was richness and wildly flourishing diversity of human character not yet subjected to the forces of personality standardization that were to come to America. In this instance, we had crossed the Mississippi River only a short distance back. Driving through a landscape of long, flat fields, the traces of cotton culture still marking the towns, an agent's office on a main street with a deer-head staring proudly, a roadside mailbox with the legend *Nil Desperandum* (a scholarly farmer or a fanciful family name?), there was the strong sense of Twain and limitless possibility of fun and excitement and reward. In such subtle psychological flavoring of the past, we may find understanding of how it could have been that

so much evil was perpetrated in America by people without a sense of evil. The feeling is of innocence. If, as fashion in historical writing in the 1960s would have it, America's history has been so full of evil—genocidal tendencies so consistent a dark thread through it—then it must also be acknowledged that this was not the dreary, stale, urban evil of our time, when people have generally lost their innocence, have the knowledge of the good and evil of contemporary historical forces, without the will or power to shape them. Where there still can be found innocence, delusions, the lost innocence of America, it is most often, appropriately enough, in the places where the old evil-doing flourished: in the West of the Indian massacres and the South of the slave holdings. Nothing is necessarily condoned by such understanding; it merely enables the mind to comprehend, out of the nothingness of the past, facts that are otherwise incomprehensible.

THE SOUTHERNER'S LAUGH. An old Negro man had in it the high degree of appreciation for his own predicament, for the folly of mankind, for the vast vagary of chance that is the cold mechanism of nature and is translated by man into unpredictable and unreliable machinery. He was standing by the side of a dirt road with three other Negroes and three white people, all civil rights workers in the heart of the Black Belt, during the worst of the repression of such groups. It was darkest night, out in the country, with woods behind and a field in front. Someone had flattened the car's tire while the group was attending a clandestine and dangerous voter registration meeting, and local whites had already driven by once, jeering. When the frightened little group began to fix the tire, the jack wouldn't work. One of the whites kept fumbling with it, hands shaking, and the rest of the group waited in terrible, tense silence—and then the old Negro man laughed. He laughed at the malfunctioning jack, at himself, at them, at the white toughs,

at all humanity. Everything slid into perspective; the tension broke; the fragility of life was shiningly clear; the trouble with the jack was fixed, and they rode off to safety.

It seems important to understand the Southerner's laughter, for it is so much of his charm, his genuine charm, particularly the white Southerner's. But there's the temptation of thinking that the laugh somehow makes sense of the nonsense. This has, surely, sadly, been part of the mystique, all the flim-flam and sleight of hand that the white South has used mostly by instinct to baffle and intrigue and, perhaps, to seduce their supposedly morally superior fellow countrymen.

Northern audiences are fascinated by accounts of the minor specimen of rogue politician still encountered up and down Southern highways. Leaning back in his chair in the old courthouse (with a John Birch "Support Your Local Police" circular on the wall, a tinted photograph of his sweet-faced children on his desk), he drawls his obscenities, racial and otherwise, in the comforting shadow of the Confederate memorial out on the lawn. Some of these fellows are genuinely witty in their cynical fashion.

But they are also murderous. "We had all these-yere demonstrators in jail, and they complained about the overcrowding, so ever day we put them out in the yard [in the full glare of ninety-degree-plus sun] so's they could git a lot of fresh air and exercise." The crippled soul of such wit is close to the Southern laugh and close, too, to that attitude which is at once one of the Southerner's unhealthiest and healthiest attributes, an acceptance of evil as part of the human condition. (In the North, there seems to be a conspiracy to deny this, a hypocritical willingness to believe all is well in the face of the most sordid evidence that it isn't.) But the white Southerner's acceptance of evil is linked to a conditioning in him which is at least in part attributable to his history of defeat and disappointment, and which teaches that any amount of availing against evil is futile, indeed, that the more one might

tinker with a social structure, the worse it gets.

So you learn to live with ills you have, rather than jump to ones you know not of. Hence the laugh's ability to transcend evil, and such other paradoxes as the well-known phenomenon of the one Negro friend of each segregationist, usually a servant. There were and still are—though on a greatly lessened scale—many instances of genuine love in the servant-master relationship. Expression of this love is often enhanced with the Negro as drinking companion. The picture is unforgettable of a vocal white segregationist and "his" black yard man drinking at dawn together, the two of them sprawled in easy chairs, drawing on long cigars, both drunk as lords. "An' what," the white is asking, "do you think of all this integration, George?" And George, in all solemn earnestness is answering: "Aw Mister Frank, I don't believe in that stuff at all."

IT WAS of course the Negro who was first able—and the process has been going on since slavery—to break out of the fatalism of the social system so set against him; this was possible, of course, precisely because it was set against him. But the fatalism—so close to the feel of Russian novels describing Czarist times—has lingered. In whites it was most often unconscious or subconscious; in Negroes it still came out in the lamentations of "apathy" regarding the newly won legal rights. "It don't matter what I do. The white man's still the white man, and we can't win."

Too often, this was true. But by the late 1960s the old coercive methods of violence and intimidation were manifest mainly in the dwindling rural areas and small towns. In the cities, things were more nearly on the Northern model—impersonal forces, environmental structuring assuring that the white man would remain the white man and that the Negro had no chance. It was here, in the ghettos a-building, in the ugly jungles of petty police venality and brutality, sordid, small-time crime, in the erosive little cruelties

of welfarism, filth, decrepitness, ugliness, and in the malaise of near-starvation, that the future of Southern race relations was being determined. Soon, it seemed almost inevitable, the South would catch up with the North—but not in the way we once dreamed. It would catch up with the worst, not the best, in race relations.

The Northern city riots boiled up at least in part out of the importation from the South of a people miserably cheated of any capability to cope with the cruel, complex routines of advanced industrial society. So, too—and this includes familiar history (see the film, *Birth of a Nation*) as well as current events (the WALLACE FOR PRESIDENT posters carried north in the cabs of the big transcontinental trucks)—has the South's racism been exported. We cannot know to what extent the old original Southern variety has diseased America, or to what extent the proliferation of racism in America is another strain of the virus—which seems worldwide. But we cannot overlook this virulent original source.

The anomaly of the South's being behind the North in the matter of riots was not lost on Southerners. In the summer of 1967, during the height of such outbreaks as Detroit and Newark, white Southerners peered into your face and said in a strange kind of tone that was part anxious and part comforted, "Things are worse up there now than they are down here, aren't they?" The Southerner seeking change is so conditioned to small hopes that he might grab onto this and encourage the notion that the thing might be avoided in the South if we do thus and so. This has been the traditional approach in human relations work in the South—to seize on any motivation, to nurture any sign of wanting to do right. The late Ralph McGill, publisher of and columnist for the *Atlanta Constitution*, summed up a gleeful reaction to the riots with this quote from a white Southerner: "Well, for once, we've got the niggers and the Yankees fighting each other. Now maybe they'll leave us alone."

The riots did not occur as soon or as frequently in the South for obvious reasons, including (1) the lack in the North of the kind of culture base (churches, extended families, social affairs, community) which, impoverished though its institutions were, long comforted Negro Southerners; (2) the lack in the North of any hope, a final disillusionment delayed in the South by new laws and visible improvements (where there was so much to improve), and (3) face it, the tradition of fear in the South, the lynch-fear conditioning against violence to whites.

While the riots came first in the North, it is interesting to note that they were foreshadowed in Birmingham, Alabama. Charles Silberman cited the rioting in 1963 in that dreariest of all the Southern cities as the harbinger of what was to come to the North.* For all his recognition of the inability of non-violence to hold the forces churning in great miserable masses of city industrial workers and unemployed people, Mr. Silberman displayed remarkable prescience, because the Birmingham riots were not really of the sort that came later in the North. They were the numb reflex of people goaded beyond endurance—by white terrorist bombings and then the onslaught of Colonel Al Lingo's state troopers randomly beating people. Far more of a harbinger was the riot that occurred in 1960 in Jacksonville, Florida. It grew out of resistance to sit-ins from white mobs swinging baseball bats. The riot in-

cluded an act unparalleled in the North during the next seven years—the firing of rifles into white homes. Negroes in Jacksonville were talking two years later of how “we controlled this city for six hours,” the part-pride, part-gleefulness, part-despair of Watts and all the later ones apparent in their talk. Remarkably, Jacksonville Negroes repeated the rioting, in 1963 in connection with public accommodations desegregation and more white recalcitrance, and, once more, in 1966, in apparent imitation of the season's Northern riots.

Why Jacksonville behaved so differently from the rest of the South is not known. Its first riot had an element of simple retaliatory violence, but there was also—and this seems to have been the first instance of it in the nation—the wanton, almost objectiveless property destruction that was later to distinguish the riots of the 1960s from those of previous years when racial conflicts pitted man against man, not man against property.

Could it be that this animus against the impersonal was more important than the racial content? Here, in a sense, was man in revolt against man-made environment, against objects and things, as though a personal enemy could no longer be discerned. Elements of this were in the young people's beach riots. Perhaps this was the way of the future. If so, one could only hope that as in earlier times when man found his environment intolerable, his impotent lashing out would give way to constructive and purposeful plans to change that environment, to do more than merely destroy.

* Charles E. Silberman, *Crisis In Black and White* (New York: Random House, 1964), pp. 143-44.

Thus Spake Fidel Castro

THERE'S A BEGUILING QUALITY to the style of Fidel Castro. Surely we have never known another Communist chieftain like him. Here is a leader in the Soviet Union's "family" of nations, hailed in Moscow each May Day, who yet lashes out with equal acerbity at the Soviet Union and China, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia, the United States and the Communist parties of Latin America.

When charged with concealing the nature of the revolution he was planning, Castro asked in reply how he could possibly have said he was for socialism since the people whose support he was seeking were opposed to socialism. What other Communist leader could mock the Soviet assurances that they had in no way violated Czech sovereignty in August 1968, and who else could first call it a military invasion, without any legal basis whatsoever, and then defend it as wholly necessary?

The most unlikely emotion to be associated with Castro is embarrassment. He derides the 3 percent increase in gross national product projected for Latin-American economic development—while his own Cuban GNP declines. He announces two years in advance that 1967 will see the greatest sugar crop in Cuban history, and when the goal isn't reached, not by a million tons or more, the 1967 crop is forgotten and he commands us to focus on the 1970 crop—which must, which will be 10 million tons. All such paradoxical aspects of the Castro revolution bespeak its distinctive, often mad character.

That Castro has not extended liberty to Cuba is generally acknowledged, even by

such admirers as Paul Sweezy and Herbert Matthews. But the argument is made that if Communism is delinquent in personal and political freedom, it provides prodigies of economic development, for which Cuba is cited by many foreign admirers. So we'd like to pursue two major questions here: What kind of outlook motivates Castro? What have been the economic fruits of the regime? My main source has been Castro's speeches.¹

One person, if no more, enjoys freedom of speech in Cuba. Castro blows his top in front of the television cameras. He's distinctive among Communist dictators by the frequency with which he says what's actually on his mind, and in a way, a marvelous antidote to his star-struck American admirers.

SHORTLY AFTER the SOVIET UNION led four junior partners in the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Castro erupted in a torrent of comment. In "a brief analysis of our position with regard to . . . Czechoslovakia. . . ." Castro went on for some 12,000 TV words on August 24, 1968. Reviewing the liberalization in Czechoslovakia after the removal of Novotny, Castro found:

A veritable liberal hysteria began to develop over there. A number of political slogans began to be aired in favor of the creation of opposition parties, in favor of ideas which were frankly anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist, such as the idea that the party should cease to exercise the function which a party

¹ All quotes from Castro's speeches here are taken from texts monitored by the U.S. government.

should exercise within a socialist society and that it should play the role of guide, reviewer, and the like—above all, a sort of spiritual director. In short, that power should cease to be a function of the Communist Party.

Although nobody within or outside Czechoslovakia has been able to uncover Czech capitalists straining to recover power in 1968, Castro warned that “the right to exercise political activities cannot be given to the old exploiters. . . .” Cuba’s Maximum Leader detected an even more dangerous trend in Czechoslovakia—there were “a number of slogans and events” pertaining to “bourgeois freedom of the press.” Indeed, the critical radio, TV, and press in Czechoslovakia meant only one thing to Castro: “key communications media were taken over and fell into the hands of reactionary elements.” Castro scorns “some European Communist parties” who “were starting to look favorably upon the liberalization movement.” He instructs the CP chieftains of Italy and Spain to beware of Czech Communists ready to give enemies of socialism the right “to talk and write freely. . . .”

Others may have been enticed by the Czech springtime, but long before the Soviet invasion, Castro says, he “did not have any doubt—and this is a very important thing—I did not have any doubt that the Czechoslovak regime was developing dangerously toward a substantial change in the system.” Other Communists may have waited to see, but not the Maximum Leader: “I reached that conclusion at the outset.” Then, as though to make even the most backward Cubans understand policy-making in their own country, Castro explains: “It is very important because I think that this opinion of mine, which I honestly held and still hold, is very important in order to determine what our position is in connection with these events.” Clear enough.

Castro lectures Communists everywhere that troubles such as developed in Czechoslovakia can be expected whenever workers

get notions about better living standards. In his “Marxism” the most dangerous illusion is the hope for a plentitude of consumer goods and services. Bluntly he analyzes the schemes of the capitalists:

The imperialists . . . have always talked . . . about fanning the flames of liberalism, going so far as promoting and making available selected types of economic aid. . . . The imperialists are waging this campaign not only in Czechoslovakia but in all East European nations including the Soviet Union. . . . They try by every means to mount publicity campaigns in favor of the way of life of the developed industrial society and in favor of the tastes and the consumer goods of the developed bourgeois societies. . . . They very subtly try to awaken in the masses admiration and an appetite for such tastes, for such consumer habits.

The imperialists, it seems, pursue this subtle scheme as part of an “East European policy,” where their efforts are often successful, Castro notes, but “they have no chance of applying these measures, to come here to crack or soften up the revolutionary spirit of the Cuban people.” This East European policy has developed “the art and refinement of consumer tastes and luxury.”

On the Soviet contention that it was not violating Czech sovereignty but was invited into Czechoslovakia, Castro pours out his contempt. “What is not appropriate here,” Castro states, “is to say that the sovereignty of the Czechoslovak state was not violated. That would be fiction and a lie. The violation was flagrant. . . . From the legal viewpoint, it cannot be justified. . . . In our judgment, the decision on Czechoslovakia can be explained only from the political viewpoint and not from a legal viewpoint. Frankly, it has absolutely no legality.” But the methods that were used are not “. . . fundamental.” “The essential thing,” he says,

is whether the socialist bloc could permit the development of a political situation which might lead to the breakdown of a socialist country. . . . From our viewpoint, it is not permissible and the socialist bloc

has the right to prevent it in one way or another.

Castro taunts the Russians "about a group of persons whose names do not even appear anywhere," those who in the Soviet version requested the invasion. Of no concern to Castro is what the working people of Czechoslovakia wanted. He devotes not a moment to the way the Czechoslovak masses—workers, students, intellectuals, party members—entered the political arena for the first time in 20 years. Castro makes clear his priorities. He warns the Cuban people that *he* would never allow such a state of affairs to arise:

No circumstances of that kind will ever occur in our country . . . because we believe that it is a duty . . . of those who direct a revolution to prevent deformations of such a nature that might make possible such circumstances.

LOOKING for a clue as to how the whole thing developed in Czechoslovakia, Castro distinguishes his views from those of his Soviet comrades. He belabors the Soviet and East European Communists for adopting "the ideal of the society of capitalist bourgeois consumption." By developing consumer-oriented systems, Castro contends, they forget the need for waging war against the imperialists. Always in the forefront, Castro warns, are "the dangers of softening up" which come from trying "to move the masses only through incentives and only through aspirations of consumption."

He recalls the frightful experiences of Cuban visitors to "more than one socialist country of Europe." They found that the youth in those lands were not being educated in the true ideals of Communism. Instead, "the youth there are highly influenced by all the ideas and by all tastes of the Western European countries; in many places all they talk about is incentives, about material incentives of all sorts, about profits and wages." Cuban Communists have been astonished to find that in the East European countries "volunteer work does not exist"

and "people are paid for performing volunteer work."

The Peace Heresy

STILL ANOTHER HERESY of the European Communists affronts Castro: "the preaching which advocates peace." The threat of war exists, Castro says, because of imperialism. The imperialists in turn are confronted by "the people's desire and need to liberate themselves from the imperialist yoke." Given such confrontation, Castro admonishes the peace propagandists in the Communist camp, that "these realities are not erased simply by preaching in our own homes, by an excessive desire for peace." Morosely, Castro admits that "at the outset" the Cuban Communists also committed such blunders; they would "either mimic or imitate everything that came here . . ." But that sort of nonsense is over. "It has been a long time," Castro boasts, "since we painted signs saying: Long Live Peace!"

It is appropriate, Castro argues, for Communists to "preach peace in the enemy camp, but never in their own camp because this will only bring about the disappearance of combat spirit. . . ." With the awful example before him of the Czech working-class demand for bread and liberty, Castro thunders:

The international reality imposes all sorts of sacrifices, not only the danger of sacrificing our blood but also sacrifices of a material nature. When the people know that the realities of the world . . . demand making investments and sacrifices to strengthen the country's defenses, the masses will be much better prepared to work enthusiastically in this direction . . . being aware of the dangers caused by their unwillingness to make these sacrifices when their minds have been influenced and softened by an incessant, senseless, and unexplainable campaign for peace.

Meanwhile he sees a fine opportunity to settle old scores with Soviet and East European comrades. The European Communists, he charges, have been practicing an imperialist type of exploitation toward

Cuba, usually under the guise of comradely technical aid. It is a minimum responsibility, Castro says, of the more advanced "socialist" countries to help the technological development of the less developed "socialist" countries. Cuba, for example, has been conducting the one kind of "technical aid" program it can perform, by sending arms to other Latin-American Communists, but only to those actually dedicated to armed rebellion.

It does not enter our minds to send anyone a bill for arms . . . or to send anyone a bill for technical assistance. It does not even enter our minds to mention it. If we are going to give aid and if we are going to mention it every day, what we are going to do is constantly humiliate those to whom we are giving aid.

Stressing his equal contempt for the liberal Czech leaders and the former Stalinist leaders, Castro recalls how *"that leadership, with which we maintained relations from the beginning, sold us many arms that were war booty captured from the Nazis and we have been paying for weapons that belonged to the Hitlerite troops that occupied Czechoslovakia . . . and we are still paying for them."* Then Castro describes how "the new socialist man" conducts business with his newer comrades. "On many occasions," he declares, "they sold us industries whose technology was very backward. We have seen the results of many of the economic ideas about trade transactions carried out in desperation to sell old weapons." Countries that needed modern technology, Castro charges, "were sold old and obsolete weapons" instead. The Czech crisis, Castro finds, is a good time for admitting "some bitter truths" including "concepts about financing, benefits, profits, and material incentives that were applied to foreign trade organizations" in order "to sell an underdeveloped country any old weapon. . . ." It's almost an understatement when Castro says "this naturally leads to discontent, disgust, misunderstandings, and a deterioration of relations with the underdeveloped world." And indeed with

such statements from friends, what remains to be said by anyone else?

PREOCCUPIED by the problem of incentives that will make men work in a society where living standards are *not* improved, Castro poses a frank question. Some ask, Castro says, whether enthusiasm will increase or decrease when Cuba becomes a "communist society":

The spirit of sacrifice of the people increases—the discipline, the work capacity, the willingness—everything increases. . . . We have seen the attitude of the workers . . . the willingness to do voluntary labor, the giving up of overtime . . . dozens of thousands of workers that go off to effect the harvests, leaving their families behind; dozens of thousands of young people who go wherever they are sent—Isle of Pines, Pinar del Rio, Camaguey—anywhere—to live under difficult conditions, under difficult housing conditions; and we have seen that this has increased in our country year by year, as awareness grows. . . .

Fellow-traveling supporters of Castro frequently refer to the "idealist" nature of the Cuban revolution. But again, a delightful aspect of Castro is that he disdains the nonsense his Western supporters attribute to him. Castro, for instance, is a charter member of the "Brezhnev doctrine" club. Indeed, he would argue that Brezhnev came to the doctrine late. There is a breathtaking scope to this doctrine which says that Russia may invade any "socialist" country that, in the Soviet view, has departed from the party line, regardless of how the people of the invaded "socialist" country feel about this! That doctrine is defended by Castro in the name of "realities," not idealism.

And we must learn . . . when one interest must give way to another interest in order that romantic and idealist positions that do not accord with these realities may be avoided. We are against all those bourgeois liberal reforms within Czechoslovakia, but we are also against the liberal economic reforms that were taking place in Czechoslo-

vakia and that have also been taking place in other socialist countries.

Since the "reforms" he condemns were taking place in the Soviet Union itself, we are left without an answer to some obvious questions: Who can set the Soviet Union right and by what means? Who will invade Moscow as Moscow invaded Prague?

Castro taunts *Pravda* for accusing Czechoslovakia of adopting "spontaneous mercantile relations" (Market economy devices) while the U.S.S.R. is pursuing the very same economic reforms:

Does this mean that they are also going to brake certain trends in the field of economy in the Soviet Union, too? Do they advocate putting the accent more and more on mercantile relations and on the effects of spontaneity on these relations—on those criteria defending even the existence of the market and the beneficial effect of that market's prices? . . .

It was George Orwell who immortalized the Stalinist use of "dialectics," whereby war becomes peace and a lie the truth. Castro may never have gone past a hundred pages or so of Marx's *Capital*, as he once admitted, but the Stalinist "dialectic" he has mastered. Evidence of what really happened in Czechoslovakia was abundant. But while all this is of no concern to Castro, nevertheless, "there is a series of matters worrying us," he says. "We are concerned that up to now, in the statements of the countries that sent their divisions to Czechoslovakia and in the explanation of the occurrences, no direct accusation of Yankee imperialism has been made." Castro scorns to wait for 1984, he berates the Soviet Communists for failing to write a proper scenario of the Czech invasion. He is impatient with all the talk of "rightism" and "deviationism" in Czechoslovakia. What should have been said by the invaders, if they took Castro's advice, is that Soviet tanks were shooting up American imperialism in Wenceslaus Square.

Again, Castro uses his discussion of the Czech events to air grievances against the

Soviet leaders. A major accusation is that the Soviets and other East European Communists have maintained friendly relations with Yugoslavia, even calling the Yugoslav leaders, Communists. Now the intrepid Castro recalls it was the Yugoslavs that "applauded with both hands all those liberal reforms" in Czechoslovakia. There's only one way to designate Yugoslavia, and surely to the Russians it has a familiar ring, "an instrument of imperialism," Castro says. Proof? It's simple: "Here we have the facts. . . . Tito was received as a hero in Prague a few weeks ago." For any who may have a lingering doubt that Tito is an agent of American imperialism, Castro spells out the evidence. "And to what extremes we are going, when this element [Tito]—known to be revisionist, condemned historically by the revolutionary movement, which has taken the role of an agent of imperialism—was received by a nation practically as a hero." That should settle the matter.

Brezhnev to Castro

THE INVASION of Czechoslovakia gives Castro an opportunity to defend his own intervention, with arms and men, in the affairs of other Latin-American countries and other Communist parties. Castro had been accused of disregarding the wishes of the majorities of party members in various Latin-American countries when intervening in their affairs. Arguments about numbers or the wishes of indigenous populations only inspire him to a still more creative use of the dialectic, that is, a Castro doctrine that beats hands down the Brezhnev doctrine:

Our party did not hesitate to help the Venezuelan guerrillas when a rightist and traitorous leadership [of the Venezuelan CP], deviating from the revolutionary line, abandoned the guerrillas and entered into shameful connivance with the regime. At that time we analyzed who was right—the group committed to maneuvering and political chicanery, which betrayed the fighters . . . or those who continued to uphold the banner of

rebellion. We did not take into account how many members of the Central Committee or Politbureau were involved, because right has nothing to do with numbers.

To speak for a principle when one is in a minority is admirable in almost any system of ethics. Castro, however, upholds the right of *military intervention* by a minority so as to teach the benighted what's right. The Cuban dictator eschews the Soviet method which always speaks of 99.9 percent "majorities" and explains its interventions as responses to "invitations." Castro proudly boasts of intervention in Guatemala and Bolivia, as well as Venezuela, even though "the revolutionaries remained in the minority." *Here he is not even discussing the actions of a minority within a country, but of an armed minority from one country, intervening in support of the minority of a minority party in another country!* And there are intellectuals who, repelled by the authoritarianism of the Russians and Chinese, give their loyalty to Castroism because they think it is somehow more "democratic."

Castro now demands of the Soviet Communists that they grant him the same prerogatives in Latin America that the Soviet Union exercises in Eastern Europe:

I ask, in the light of the facts and in the light of the bitter reality which led the Warsaw Pact countries to send their forces to crush a counterrevolution in Czechoslovakia and to support a minority there . . . against a majority with rightist positions; I ask if they will cease supporting also in Latin America those rightist, reformist, submissive and conciliatory leaderships, enemies of revolutionary armed struggle, who oppose the people's liberation struggle.

In this philosophy of revolutionary right, one wonders who decides what is right and revolutionary, especially when such decisions involve armed intervention? (Nor can one escape the parallel with a decision made in our own country, at the time of Tonkin Bay, to pursue a course of armed intervention in Vietnam.) At times Castro seems content to

leave such decisions in Europe to the party with the biggest battalions and the most missiles. But then again he isn't so satisfied with that criterion, because the European party with just those powerful resources takes a rightist, conciliatory, and conniving position.

No event since the U.S.-sponsored Bay of Pigs invasion gave Castro such a boost in morale as the invasion of Czechoslovakia. He had begun to despair because there was so much detente and peace in the air. Gleelessly, he reads a dispatch from Washington quoting Secretary of State Rusk to the effect that Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia will hinder rapprochement between East and West. *Castro is especially pleased because the Soviet action has created additional obstacles to ratification of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty.* "We can only express our happiness over this," he exults. If the Russians are to learn the logical lessons of their intervention in Czechoslovakia, Castro tells them to dispense with "idyllic hopes of an improvement in relations with the . . . United States."

At this point we can draw some conclusions about Castroism in the light of his analysis of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia:

- *Castroism adopts the traditional Leninist precept that opponents of the regime must not be allowed "to talk and write freely." And more in line with Stalinism, the proletariat and even party members must be limited and controlled by the Maximum Leadership.*
- *The root of all "opportunistic deviations" in the "socialist countries" must be sought in the dangers of "consumerism."*
- *National sovereignty is a goal to be proclaimed when seeking power, but once power has been won there are "higher" interests, defined of course by the Maximum Leader, which can violate national sovereignty.*
- *Peace can be preached in capitalist countries, but preaching it in the "socialist" countries is impermissible; there, the masses must be kept in constant readiness for war, military intervention, and revolution.*
- *Parallel to the Brezhnev doctrine there is*

the Castro doctrine, which upholds the right of Cuban Communists to intervene in other Latin-American countries without regard to the wishes of the people, or even the majority of CP members, in those countries.

Castro on Mao

WHEN CASTRO RECENTLY ASKED the Soviet Communists how extensive was the protection of the Brezhnev doctrine, he could have been thinking about a possible Soviet strike against China. What stand the Cubans would take in such an event may be discovered from examining Castro's views on China. Indeed, the problem of Cuba's relations with China are worth pursuing from at least two viewpoints: first, as a way of examining relations among Communist governments and second, for illumination about economic conditions in Cuba and how they are affected by its relations with other Communist countries.

Fortunately, Castro has again spoken long and vehemently about Cuba's relations with the land of "the great cultural revolution." Mao Tse-tung's variant of Stalinism has enjoyed considerable influence on Castroism. Especially appealing to Cuba's leader was the Chinese emphasis on violent revolution and the deprecation of "consumerism" and material incentives as a reward for labor. Foreign champions of Castroism have been particularly taken by what seemed to them the firm solidarity of the Cuban and Chinese regimes. One of the most enthusiastic is Edward Boorstein, an American economist who worked three and a half years in Castro's Cuba and who dedicated a book on his experiences "to Commandante Guevara." In that book, *The Economic Transformation of Cuba*, Boorstein is ecstatic about a Chinese economic discovery called "walking on two legs," a figure of speech which describes the importance of both centralization and arousing the enthusiasm of local authorities.²

Early in 1960 Cuba established close and large-scale economic ties with the Soviet Union and China. Boorstein makes it clear that this happened *before* Cuba's nationalization of American firms. Above all, Boorstein wants us to know that a necessary condition for Cuba's economic emancipation was the sundering of ties with the United States. Castro and Boorstein were under no illusions, "the Revolution was engaged in a life or death struggle with the United States."³ The sale of 50,000 tons of Cuban sugar to China in January 1960 was "an even greater act of independence than the agreement with the Soviet Union. . . ."⁴

Boorstein stresses the difference between Cuban economic relations with the Communist countries and those of the past with the United States. Now Cuba would benefit from economic relations, in contrast to exploitation by the U.S. Boorstein finds Cuban-Chinese trade, especially of sugar for rice, an excellent example of the true mutuality of economic relations between Communist countries. And there is no question that rice was important for Cuba. Castro would soon be reinstating an exaggerated form of monoculture based on sugar production. One consequence of this policy was a drastic decline of rice production. Hence, Cubans desperately needed that Chinese rice.

Should Cuba have continued to develop her own rice production—as she had been doing under the old regime? Boorstein has an interesting answer: "Cuba can, at considerable cost, grow more rice and reduce her trade dependence on China. But general economic self-sufficiency is out of the question."⁵ How then meet the demand for rice and other badly needed products? "The only policy for Cuba to follow is to develop her economy, trade freely with the socialist countries and any others that are willing. . . ."⁶ Boorstein stresses the advantages of Cuba's

³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 223.

² *The Economic Transformation of Cuba*, by Edward Boorstein (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1968), p. 258.

trade with "socialist" countries in contrast to the exploitation of commercial relations by the capitalists.

A socialist market need not be taken as given in the same way as a capitalist market. The socialist market can be changed by conscious planning if there are good reasons for doing so. And meeting the needs of another socialist country, establishing a sensible, mutually beneficial arrangement between two socialist countries, *are* good reasons.⁷

ONE ITEM in this picture of paradise is true: "A socialist market can be changed." But, alas, not in the way Boorstein meant it.

On January 2, 1966, the seventh anniversary of Castro's assumption of power, he began to unfold the story of what was happening with one such "socialist market." First, he had some bad news: Cubans were not going to attain their goals for sugar cultivation because of lack of rainfall. Having placed so much reliance on the sugar crop, a drought could have a most damaging effect on the economy. It did. But there was still another product, concerning which "there will be difficulties," Castro said, "because of reasons beyond our control, this year. That product is rice."

Castro began the explanation. Cuba's orientation, he said, had been toward increasing the volume of trade with China. In mid-November 1965, they had sent a trade delegation to Peking to negotiate increasing commerce, especially in sugar and rice. The Chinese said they would not be able to buy the 800,000 tons of sugar as they had promised before, and they gave three reasons, according to Castro. First, China itself had a big sugar harvest; second, the Soviet Union was making payment of a balance owed to China, "by using part of the sugar which was bought from Cuba"; and third, Chinese sugar stocks were so high that their people wouldn't even require coupons to buy sugar. The Chinese would cut back imports from Cuba to 1964 levels, and exports to Cuba to

1960 levels. They were going to reduce rice exports to Cuba by 150,000 tons, Castro said. Only the more sophisticated listeners that day could appreciate the gravity of the conflict that had arisen between Cuba and China. They would soon be told in more detail.

Meanwhile Castro reverted to a standard device for coping with bad news: he talked about the future. Castro promised that "by 1970 we will be among the best fed peoples, not only in quantity, but in quality, thanks to our present efforts, thanks to the development of our essentially agricultural economy during this first year." Although faced with a Chinese rice embargo, Castro declared that in the future the Cuban diet would "be much richer in proteins, vitamins, minerals, and energy than when our diet was based on rice." If anyone doubted how rosy the future would be, Castro said, "let him inform himself of the basic principles of dietetics." (An improvement over dialectics.) For will a people as revolutionary as the Cubans "not be capable of changing a habit of consumption of an article that is not essential to the health of the people?" Unfortunately, the Maximum Leader was vague about how Cuba was going to make available more nutritious, high protein food in place of the rice which was disappearing for two reasons—first, Cuba's reversion to sugar monoculture, second China's embargo.

On January 2, 1966, the people still applauded mention of the Chinese Peoples Republic. Soon that changed. On February 6, 1966, *Prensa Latina* issued a statement by Castro replying to a statement of the Chinese Peoples Republic, through an official in its Ministry of Foreign Trade. "Nobody will believe," Castro said,

that in China a simple, unknown official in the Foreign Trade Ministry can make statements calling a liar the prime minister of a socialist state with which formal diplomatic relations are maintained, and by virtue of their political content and disrespectful form, involving the possibility of seriously affect-

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 200.

ing relations between two countries like Cuba and China. Such statements can only come from the highest echelons of the Chinese government.

Because of the Chinese action, Castro said, "rice, the traditional and considerable product of Cuban consumption, would be cut back to almost half the amount of the previous year." Again and again Castro referred to one of the reasons China was giving for cutting Cuban sugar imports, namely that the Soviet Union was reshipping Cuban sugar to China.

China's "bad faith," Castro charged, was revealed by the abrupt manner in which the action was taken. China had failed not only to warn about any impending curtailment of rice shipments, but had actually promised "to increase its rice exports to Cuba to 250,000 tons." So, in the midst of friendly relations between two "socialist" countries, suddenly this:

We never thought [Castro stated] that the Chinese government—as though hiding a dagger—reserved the right, absolutely unilaterally and without any kind of warning or previous discussion, to interpret the scope of its pledge precisely at a time when our country was not in a position nor had the means of acquiring the rice in other markets.

Ruefully, Castro said that the Cuban 1965 sugar crop had declined, but "with less sugar, we offered more; you, with more rice, offered less." So there would be no mistaking the kind of relations now existing between Cuba and China, Castro accused the Chinese government of having joined the U.S. blockade against Cuba. Now he warms up his adjectives and the Chinese Communists are "venemous . . . insinuating . . . subtle . . . cynical."

All this happened, Castro relates, on the eve of a "Solidarity Conference" of the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America to be held in Havana. "The Chinese government committed a criminal act of economic aggression," says Castro, "against our country, in a year of serious difficulties."

Though he had used restraint on January 2, his February 6 statement accuses the Chinese government of "perfidy, hypocrisy, malevolent insinuations, and disdain for our small country."

And Castro reveals a little bit more about the split with China. The latter, it turns out, sought to do in Cuba what Cuba had been doing in Venezuela, Bolivia, Guatemala, and elsewhere. China was trying to conduct political propaganda in Cuba, Castro charged, "ignoring our government's exclusive prerogatives as head of a sovereign country." (Odd how sovereignty becomes a right under some circumstances!)

After having made clear to China that Cuba would allow no interference with its sovereign rights, Castro says, "the Chinese government has increased the shipment and mass distribution of propaganda material to our country. . . ." They were extending this effort "among the officers of the revolutionary armed forces of Cuba," Castro said, "up to the general staffs of the army." That put China in the same camp as the United States, according to Castro, and he warned "that our country had liberated itself from that imperialism 90 miles from our shores and it was not willing to permit another powerful state to come 20,000 kilometers to impose similar practices on us. . . ." The Chinese answer to Cuban remonstrances against Chinese propaganda in Cuba came "in the form of brutal economic reprisal for purely political reasons." China was attempting to achieve political aims by economic warfare, "an obvious extortionist position" evidenced by the trade negotiations.

Castro speaks directly about relations among "socialist" countries in the brave new world of tomorrow. China's actions, he says, raise a fundamental issue:

whether in the world of tomorrow the powerful nations can assume the right to blackmail, extort, pressure, attack, and strangle small peoples; whether in the world of tomorrow, which the revolutionaries are struggling to establish, there are to continue

to prevail the worst methods of piracy, oppression, and filibusterism which have been established in the world since a class society has existed by regimes of slavery, feudal regimes, absolute monarchies, the bourgeois states, and, in the contemporary world, the imperialist states.

Reading this description of Chinese-Cuban relations, one must bear in mind how difficult it has been for Communists traditionally to "equate" anything in the capitalist world and the "socialist" world.

SOON THEREAFTER, IN ANOTHER ADDRESS to the nation, on March 14, 1966, Cuba's leader describes China as a fascist society!⁸ When China's leaders refer to Cuban Communists as "revisionists," Castro says, they have reached "the height of absurdity . . . fit only for herds who move by conditioned reflexes."

Castro now directs his most charming invective against "satellite relationships" among Communists, whether countries, parties, or "agents," as he now describes foreign Communists who take the Maoist position. The slanders and lies spread by these supporters of China, Castro charges, are "shameful proof of the damage that satellitism (*satellismo*) does and can do in the world, the fact that some agents—because they are nothing more than agents of that nation—have committed the stupidity, the historic mistake of writing slanderous articles against the Cuban revolution on Chinese orders." The Maoists active among students in Latin America, Castro accuses of being payroll revolutionists, subsisting on Peking gold.

The implications of Castro's assault on Mao Tse-tung delivered on March 14, 1966, far transcend the phenomenon of Chinese Communism:

If we are going to argue basically, we must tell some basic truths and we must unmask everything that is of fascist type hidden un-

der Marxist emblems. Of course this story of revolutionaries, who in spite of having done good things in their lives have committed great barbarities later at the end of their lives, is not new. During the past days we have seen with sorrow the things that men are capable of doing when they degenerate.

Quite consciously Castro widens the scope of his indictment. What happened in China, according to Castro, is "a result in part, of having confused Marxism-Leninism with fascism, with absolutism. They are the result of having introduced the style of absolute monarchies into the contemporary socialist revolutions." *Castro even has the wit, in contrasting Communist regimes with absolute monarchies, to recognize the advantages of the latter:*

The absolute monarchies at least had the advantage of providing an heir to power. For socialism to accept the method, the system of absolute monarchies, is the worst absurdity because then the fight among the candidates to become the absolute monarch would begin.

A bit more difficult to understand is Castro's obvious disregard of the implications for Cuba, for example, when he asks: "And what is the good of a party where everything revolves around one man?" The man who asked that question is Prime Minister of his government, First Secretary of the Party, Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, President of the Central Planning Board and Director of the INRA (National Agrarian Reform Institute).

Still, one of Castro's boasts is well-founded—that he expresses his own opinions "in the midst of a history of humanity full of the satellite system, full of hegemonies, full of subjections. . . ." But the Castro who in 1966 was so stoutly defending the "absolute equality" that must prevail among the peoples, large and small, is the same who later sanctioned the invasion of Czechoslovakia because national sovereignty must give way before "higher interests."

Here we can draw some additional con-

⁸ The fraternal compliment is returned. A recent issue of the theoretical journal of the American Maoists features an article by Jake Rosen which describes Castroite Cuba as a feudal society.

clusions about the nature of "Castroism" based on Castro's analysis of Cuban-Chinese relations:

- *That Castro will maintain an independent posture even though he may temporarily ally himself with the Soviet or the Chinese Communist camp.*
- *That Castroism is a peculiar variant of Communism which permits itself a critical analysis of other Communist variants which comes close to a rejection of the entire Communist experience. (Castro's condemnation of satellismo, is, for example, a condemnation of every Communist regime at one time or another, and in many cases, at all times; his exposé of Communist agents is a devastating description of Comintern practice, as well as of the Cominform and of every other Communist regime, including Castro's. His description of how revolutionary Communist regimes degenerate into fascism gives added point to the term totalitarianism.)*

Economic Anarchy

THE FAILURES OF CUBA'S ECONOMY under Castro are directly related to the planlessness of what passes for planned economy in a centrally directed, totalitarian economic system. In his speech of March 14, 1966, discussing Cuba's rice shortage, Castro completely forgets that six weeks earlier he was going to solve the rice problem by switching Cuba to higher quality products. Now he recalls that in Oriente province new dams are being built. "Therefore, when we have that dam water," he says, "we will be able to produce most of the rice we consume in our country on the basis of two crops a year and high yields." Having so recently disparaged rice and promised to put in high quality crops, Castro now declares he will assign 100 youths from the Soil Institute and several engineers to develop the technology needed to produce two rice crops a year. Within three or four years, Castro pledges, "we will be able to resolve this problem."

The awkward thing about placing dates on your promises is that they fall due. Three years have passed and the problem has not been solved. Indeed Castro has admitted that

the 1968 rice crop was a mere 50,000 tons. Rice production in 1960, shortly after Castro came to power, was 323,000 metric tons.⁹ These were the fruits of abandoning diversification of Cuban agriculture and placing reliance on trade with the "socialist" world.

While few would contend that freedom has fared well in Cuba under Castro, there have been social achievements. These have included an expansion of educational opportunities and the elimination of much illiteracy. (This achievement has to be measured in terms of the 70 percent literacy *before* Castro came to power.) There has also been an extension of medical and hospital care.

The failures of economics in Castro's Cuba are almost as striking as the absence of liberty or the betrayal of the promises Castro made in his "History Will Absolve Me" address.¹⁰ What is odd is how readily the myth is accepted that while Communist Cuba lacks liberty it has made much economic progress. As one wades through Castro's speeches one finds many statistics. Wherever these are clear and precise, the chances are he is talking about the future. But one will also find evidence of present conditions: economic decline, crop failure, and retrogression.

Background for any survey of economic developments in Cuba is the extremely rapid and practically total nationalization of industry and collectivization of agriculture. Collectivization may be an obsolete term because state farms have become the dominant agricultural unit. By 1968 retail trade and small service establishments were nationalized to make it 100 percent for industry, construction, transportation, banking, wholesale, retail, and foreign trade. This was more rapid "socialization" than Lenin ever attempted in Russia. Incredibly, small kiosks and service establishments in Cuba were taken over by the state in 1968, despite the lessons of every East European country that

⁹ "The Revolutionary Offensive," by Carmelo Mesa-Lago, in *Trans-action*, April 1969, p. 62.

¹⁰ *The Castro Revolution: Myths and Realities*, by Theodore Draper (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1962); pp. 32-34, 47.

has attempted this—service and distribution, from pretzel vending to dry cleaning, tend to disappear to the degree that they are nationalized.

The earlier failures of Cuban Communist economy (1961–1963) have been documented by the friends and fellow travelers of the regime, because the regime itself went into detail about these failures. One searches Boorstein's glowing pages for data to support his contention that there has been economic progress. One can't find them, at least for the years following 1961.

The one period of economic progress came in the first two years of the regime. For those two years there is data in the Boorstein book, and it shows that there was economic growth, mainly because of the reserves Castro inherited.

"While it was not fully clear at the end of 1960," Boorstein writes, "the management of the Cuban economy during the first two years of the Revolution was made easier than usual by the existence of a large amount of reserves."¹¹ These included not only unutilized resources and dollar holdings, but, as Boorstein shows, 5 million head of cattle, factories with stocks of spare parts and raw materials, retail stores with large supplies of consumer goods. Boorstein reiterates: "The rapid progress of the Cuban economy in the early years after the Revolution took power was made possible by the reserves."¹²

But once its inheritance was used up, the Castro regime had to depend on its own policies and the help of the Communist world. Then the situation changed drastically. Rubles or Yuan didn't turn out to be the same as dollars. When Cuba's dollar earnings "were running over \$700 million per year," they could buy raw materials for industry, machinery, food, clothing, paper supplies, jute sacks, Boorstein explains. It's quite another thing, he notes, when "about 80 percent of Cuba's trade is with the socialist countries and its dollar earnings are only a

fraction of what they used to be."¹³ Though I disagree with official U.S. policy under which trade with Cuba has been embargoed, it's important to understand that Leninists like Castro and Boorstein consider the source of Cuba's economic troubles to be its ties with the United States. Breaking those ties, they said, was an essential condition for Cuba's progress.

WHEN CUBA BEGAN its "socialist" planning and large-scale trade with the Soviet Union, China, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, and other Communist countries, its economy moved from failure to disaster. Not only was there a shortage of the more nutritious food, but even the poorest food disappeared. Boorstein tells how *viandas*, or tubers, which are the poor man's sustenance, "began to vanish from the stores."¹⁴ Castro described how the poor man's food disappeared. He told a 1961 conference how his regime would periodically become involved in "a great agricultural purpose. Nevertheless *malanga* was forgotten, despite the many times that we have said that if there is nothing else to eat we will eat *malanga*. There has been no *malanga* anywhere and this naturally created immediate pressure on *boniato*. And then when both were scarce, the consumer went in search of potatoes, and the stock of 10,000 quintals daily, calculated for normal situations, turned out to be insufficient."¹⁵

At the same conference Che Guevara also described the people's miseries. He told how planning failed because it was based on the assumption that goods which were expected would arrive. They didn't, and "absolutely none of the production goals have been met."¹⁶ Coca Cola is practically a necessity in Cuba, "given the climate." But Cuba's socialist Coca Cola, Guevara found, "tastes like cough syrup."¹⁷ Matches, the Commandante says, are a disgrace, they never light. Dis-

¹¹ Boorstein, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 82.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

cussing the shortage of tooth paste, Guevara cautions the hoarders: "I am advising people not to hoard toothpaste and then come around after four months with the protest they have a stone in the tube. . . ." ¹⁸

Remember that Cuba was not like many of the East European countries that were just beginning to produce such consumer goods. Cuban workers had made these articles and made them well, before Castro. Guevara dwelt on something "which people were beginning to notice and wonder about: a deterioration in the quality of goods." ¹⁹ Boorstein cites examples: shoes didn't come in pairs, seams weren't right and "the shoddiness seemed clearly due to the workmanship," not just a lack of raw materials. ²⁰

Is there any evidence of improvement after the 1961 conference? If so, Boorstein, who carries the story through 1966, doesn't provide any. "Most of the goals announced . . . were not met," Boorstein finds. ²¹ How does a book devoted to unrestrained praise of Cuban economic progress cope with a complete inability to cite any progress? In the same way that Castro handles the problem—through an enthusiastic reliance on the future tense:

there *will* be mammoth increases in the production of chickens, eggs, *viandas*, beans, fats and oils, pork and beef, and other food-stuffs. There *will* be factory after factory, and Cuba *will* achieve a balanced, rational industrialization. The standard of living *will* rise much more than the 60 percent per capita projected by Regino Boti. ²² [Emphasis in original.]

About the roots of Cuba's agrarian crisis the reader will find little in Boorstein. Theodore Draper reviews all available Cuban Communist sources, ²³ and these point un-

mistakably to collectivization as the source of the retrogression. Castro had moved from cooperatives to Soviet style Kolkhozes, and then mainly to state farms. Of all agriculture 70 percent was "socialized," and the remaining private farming was hobbled by state controls.

The agrarian failures were matched by industrial fiasco. When Castro and Guevara set about industrializing Cuba in the early sixties, they did so with little regard for costs and sources of raw materials, or for incentives by which men work. They discovered soon enough that a factory, having to import its raw materials at prices higher than the prices at which the finished goods could have been purchased in the first place, was not much of an asset. By the middle sixties Castro abandoned the concentration on industry and decided to emphasize agriculture. But the strangest development of all was the return to sugar monoculture, far and beyond the degree to which it existed in the two or three decades before Castro came to power.

Back to Monoculture

TOWARD THE END OF 1963 Castro made it known that sugar would become the touchstone of Cuba's economy. In Moscow Khrushchev was stressing the importance of an international division of labor among the Communist countries. The Soviets offered to take up a high percentage of the Cuban sugar crop, at favorable prices. The full impact of Castro's decision must be examined in the light of the long-standing Leninist indictment of imperialism for forcing colonial and underdeveloped countries to concentrate on a single crop. Monoculture, in the Leninist view, is a policy dictated by the imperialist monopolies. Boorstein wrote: "It was the monopolies that geared the Cuban economy to sugar. . . ." ²⁴ Well, the monopolies were gone, and by 1963 it wouldn't even be cor-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 127-28.

²³ *Castroism: Theory and Practice*, by Theodore

Draper (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1965), pp. 135-221.

²⁴ Boorstein, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

rect to say that the Russians were responsible for Cuba's reversion to monoculture. It was Castro who so decided.

Draper has shown that there was far more diversification of agriculture in the decade before Castro came to power than in the years following the 1963 decision to concentrate on sugar. Before Castro there had been a gradual increase of rice, coffee, beans, fruit, and vegetable crops; the role of sugar was receding. With the attempt to force diversification and industrialization in the first three years of the Castro regime, both agriculture and industry were set back. Then, when Castro ordered an overwhelming emphasis on sugar again, the ground that had been gained in diversification was lost.²⁵ One can indeed wonder "whether a revolution was really necessary to restore sugar to the place it had in the Cuba of the 1920s."²⁶

From 1964 to the present the decline and stagnation in Cuba's economy has continued. Carmelo Mesa-Logo, formerly an expert on social security in Castro's 1959 government, now acting director of the Center for Latin-American Studies at the University of Pittsburgh, has combed the Cuban literature. He published some of his findings in the April 1969 *Trans-action*. Since they are based on official Cuban statistics Professor Mesa-Logo urges caution in reading these figures. The bias favors the regime. Starting with the crisis year of 1962, when the Gross National Product was 3.079 billion pesos (at current prices), here are the GNP figures for subsequent years:²⁷

1963	3.788 billion pesos
1964	4.202 billion pesos
1965	4.136 billion pesos
1966	4.039 billion pesos
1967	n.a.
1968	4 billion pesos

For agriculture alone the figures are even more depressing. The table below traces falling agricultural production from 1957 to 1966.²⁸

The increase in agricultural production that took place from 1958 to 1961 occurred when most of the land was still privately owned. Mesa-Logo indicates a correlation between declining production and state enterprises, central planning and the substitution of "moral incentives" for material incentives. He cites figures showing that livestock production fell 6 percent between 1961 and 1966 and the per capita decline was 12 percent. Mining also fell, with decreasing output of nickel, copper, manganese, iron ore, and crude oil between 1957 and 1965.²⁹

Since Castro's return to a sugar economy he has placed the greatest emphasis on achieving a 10 million ton sugar harvest in 1970. But occasionally he also sets goals for other products. In a speech broadcast on November 26, 1965, he projected 2 million quintals of coffee by 1970 (a quintal is 100 kilograms or about 220 pounds). There was a special reason for offering this grand goal. In that same speech he confessed that coffee

²⁵ Draper, *Castroism*, pp. 158-59.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

²⁷ Carmelo Mesa-Logo, *Trans-action*, p. 24.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN CUBA: 1957-1966

(Index numbers: 1952-56=100)

	1957-58	58-59	59-60	60-61	61-62	62-63	63-64	64-65	65-66
Total Production:	113	114	117	133	106	94	100	122	101
Per Capita Production:	106	104	105	117	92	80	83	99	80

production in 1965 would be about 600,000 quintals, less than half of the 1.25 million quintals of the year before. He was eloquent about coffee production in 1970 because he wanted to explain that "What we have is an enormous deficit of coffee. . . ."

In his January 2, 1966 speech Castro recalls that 1965 had been designated the year of agriculture. But the goal of 6.5 million tons of sugar for that year was not fulfilled, not by half a million tons or so. Then, on April 15, 1966, Major Fidel Castro is interviewed while cutting sugar cane, and he says that the crop in 1966 will come to only 5 million tons. In a speech a few days later, on April 20, Fidel casually makes the point that the biggest sugar crop in Cuban history was under the old regime, when 7.16 million tons were harvested. Then he makes the specific promise that in 1967 Cuba will have the greatest sugar crop in its history. Actually the 1967 harvest reached 6.128 million tons, respectable by the standards of Castro Cuba but far below the pre-Castro record. Needless to say, in 1967 Castro didn't refer to his promise of April 20, 1966.

Often when discussing Cuba's economic situation, Castro cites with true and telling effect the half million sugar workers who used to be unemployed for several months a year under the old regime. He does so in his April 20, 1966 speech and again recounts the significant gains made in public education and public health. There are no unemployed in the countryside; instead there is a severe labor shortage in the sugar fields. But he also says that many workers "still live in barracks" and lack water systems, roads, and electricity. There is not enough cement, Castro says in a July 26, 1966 speech, and even if they built 100,000 living units a year between 1970 and 1980 they would not have enough housing by that year. Another problem of the old regime persists—the sharp contrast between Havana and the interior. As a result, he says, there is an "exodus to Havana" which intensifies the water and housing problem in the capital.

DEPLORING how many years of work are needed "to emerge from this poverty," Castro comes up with another forecast: "between 1970 and 1980 Yankee imperialism will not have one square inch of imperialist property left in Latin America." Judging by the reception Rockefeller received in Latin America, this prophecy may turn out to be closer to the mark than those about milk and honey in Cuba. Castro made that last forecast by way of introducing the remark: "You know that this year's sugar harvest was small." And Castro is stung by some, "even leftist elements in Latin America," who say: "We have heard that Cuba has made great progress in education, in public health, but we are still in the dark about its progress in the field of economy." Such people, Castro says, think economic problems can be solved as "Mandrake the Magician would do."

Castro decries comparisons with Frei's Chile because Cuba, he points out, has been blockaded by imperialism and has to arm its youth. This, by way of introducing another favorite theme, his disappointment with all the comrades, from Moscow to Sofia, who persist in trading with Chile and other Latin-American countries that refuse to trade with Cuba.

Castro has an even more effective ploy whenever he finds Cuba's economic problems unpalatable for discussion. All he has to do, with very little exaggeration, is to describe—often and well—the fiasco of United States policies in Latin America. For example, on April 20, 1967, he lists the long-standing grievances of the Latin Americans, sunk in poverty, with population growing almost as fast as resources:

- that Latin-American countries sell raw materials cheap to the U.S.;

- that they buy manufactured goods at high prices;

- that U.S. credits are often onerous, or insufficient, or must be spent in the U.S.;

- that U.S. tariffs are restrictive and harmful;

—that U.S. business takes out huge profits from investments in resource-rich Latin-American countries whose people are terribly poor.

Castro also taunts the U.S. and the other republics of Latin America for projecting a low rate of growth—3 percent—of GNP, in 1966. This is hardly more than population growth, Castro says. He doesn't bother to mention that GNP in Cuba declined that year, both absolutely and per capita.

On May 27, 1969, Castro made a speech which might have been intended to prepare for a possible fiasco with respect to the goal of 10 million tons of sugar in 1970. "In a 10 million ton sugar harvest," Castro said, "even to have the land surface to have such a harvest under normal conditions, a drought year could reduce the output to 6.5 or 7 million tons." This may be a roundabout way of saying that 6.5 million tons are not 10 million. And that in turn was by way of informing folks that the 1969 crop was only 4,277,482 tons, a decline from the 1968 harvest of 4,735,000 tons.

Significant, too, was the decline in yield per acre this year; there was a 10 percent decline of productivity, Castro said in his May 28 speech. He explained "how we had relegated, underestimated the importance of the '69 sugar harvest, and concentrated attention above all on the '70 harvest goal." Castro says there were even provinces that forgot there was a sugar harvest in 1969. All this, mind you, under a "planned" economy! Since all the Cuban kids now learn reading, writing, and arithmetic, even a child can now ask: what if the 1970 goal is attained? If you add the sugar harvest totals of 1969 and 1970 they won't come to more than those of two years back-to-back 20 years ago. And 20 years ago Cuba was diversifying agriculture, to boot.

So much is being gambled on the 1970 sugar harvest that it has already brought harm to the Cuban economy. Lack of diversification will be felt even more strongly with a successful crop in 1970. The lack of bal-

ance in the economy becomes accentuated. And with its dependence on the "socialist" market, the example of China surely shows what a gamble that is for Cuba. These "are not always pleasant circumstances," Castro says about the results of 1968 and 1969.

DISCUSSION of Castro's economics often return, quite properly, to the matter of incentives. When Guevara was in Cuba, his influence was always on the side of decrying material rewards for work and emphasizing the moral equivalents. Castro agreed with Guevara in this respect. "We shall never create a socialist awareness and a communist awareness out of a peso sign in the minds and hearts of men and women of the people," Castro declared on September 29, 1966. He used a clever metaphor to make his point; he said there were many more Don Quixotes than Sancho Panzas among the people. Those who thought you could get people to work better "by appealing to individual selfishness" were reactionary.

All this was part of an enormous propaganda effort and it must have had important impact among Cuban youth. But Castro was far too realistic to think he would take in the sugar crops, or run the country, on revolutionary fervor. The history of compulsory military service in Cuba is a story of an important "incentive" to make people work, an "incentive" neither "material" nor "moral." After taking power Castro made a categorical pledge to his people: "We will not establish military service because it is not right to force a man to put on a uniform and a helmet, to give him a rifle and force him to march."⁸⁰ When compulsory military service was introduced in 1963, the 1959 pledge went the way of all the "History Will Absolve Me" promises. Little effort was made to conceal a major purpose—to get cheap, forced labor. The young recruits were put to work cutting sugar cane, and the seven pesos a month they got was only a fraction of the wages workers received. And in Cuba, if

⁸⁰ Draper, *Castroism*, p. 174.

you dislike this arrangement, you can't organize a strike or even a demonstration.

Nor was this the only source of forced labor in Cuba. Even where students and youth were recruited for labor in the fields by exhortation, the pressures were so intense that the word "voluntary" is a misuse of language. Early in 1969 readers of the *New York Times Magazine* learned about another method for getting forced labor into the fields. There were long-haired youths, outlandishly dressed by conventional standards, in Havana and other cities. José Yglesias, writing in the *New York Times Magazine* of January 12, 1969, describes how "without warning, the police ringed the hippie area and indiscriminately led everyone in the streets into Leyland buses and drove them off to the police stations." Those who could not prove that they were working, or that they belonged to Communist mass organizations, "were sent off to state farms where work and study, the Cuban cure for all ills, is expected to rehabilitate them."

Yglesias is a warm supporter of the Castro regime but a clever reporter, so he asks two acquaintances: "Didn't it bother them . . . that these kids were summarily rounded up and sent off to farms without the opportunity to defend themselves in court?" Yglesias doesn't conceal his satisfaction with the answers. No, they were not shocked. They trusted the authorities. They even gave an example of a girl friend who had been picked up in the raid, apparently because she likes to wear very short skirts. But she proved to the police that "she works and shares none of the hippie ideology," so they released her. Considering the attitudes of the more extreme rebels in our colleges, it is a bit mysterious that they happily cite Castro and Guevara, along with Mao Tse-tung, as redeemers of our time.

The Czech economist Ota Sik pointed out some time ago that whenever a regime emphasizes "moral" incentives as against "material" incentives, it is probably imposing forced labor on its people. There's a

Kafkaesque quality about the discussion by Boorstein and other fellow travelers about "moral" versus "material" incentives. It's as though we had not gone through the history of voluntary Sabbath labor in Russia.

Union Busting

ABSOLUTELY essential for imposing a system of labor in a totalitarian regime is the destruction of trade unions. It took Lenin about a year to smash the Russian trade unions. And that's as long as it took Castro in Cuba. When the Cuban trade unions were reconstituted in 1959, David Salvador, a labor hero of the July 26th Movement, imprisoned under Batista, was the obvious choice of the Cuban workers for leadership. He became Secretary General of the Cuban unions; but not for long. The choice of the workers meant nothing when Castro decided to replace the July 26th Movement members, the men who fought for Castro's revolution, with the old-line Communists, who had opposed Castro's revolution. Salvador was soon back in the same jails where he had served under Batista.³¹

All this was necessary, of course, to transform the unions into state agencies for driving labor. Their assignment was simple—to raise productivity, maintain labor discipline, and suppress discontent. Raul Castro has an apt exposition of the role of the Cuban trade unions:

Previously it was necessary for trade union leaders to constantly struggle for advantages, for obtaining more profits from the capitalist magnates. Today the great task of the CTC-R and of the trade unions comprising it, is to increase production, activate voluntary workers, augment discipline at work, increase yield, and improve the quality of what is produced.³²

Activating "voluntary labor" is no small part of the role of the unions in Cuba. Castro,

³¹ Draper, *The Castro Revolution*, pp. 25-26.

³² Quoted in *The Labor Sector and Socialist Distribution in Cuba*, by Carmelo Mesa-Lago (Frederick A. Praeger, 1968), p. 162.

in one of his speeches, boasts of workers who stay on the job consecutively and without asking overtime pay, for 16, 32, even 48 hours at a stretch! Perhaps the most abject description of the functions of the unions was given by the man whom Castro appointed to head the CTC-R. The R stands for revolution, but the fascinating thing about Lazaro Pena, named by Castro to head the organization, is that in 1939 Batista the butcher had appointed the very same Pena to head the CTC, without the R. Said Pena:

Our trade union movement has two slogans. One, is to do always whatever the revolutionary power decides; all that the government agrees upon. The other slogan is to work, and with this law we shall work and produce more.³³

THE SINGLE-MINDED AUDACITY that helped Castro lead a revolution to overthrow a brutal dictatorship earns him an important place in history. But once the Batista regime had been overthrown and Castro was firmly in the saddle, his revolution suffered the fate of the other Communist revolutions of the 20th century. An even more stringent tyranny replaced the old. Revolutionaries whose only "crime" was loyalty to the ideals of the 26th of July Movement and to the promises of the "History Will Absolve Me" speech, have been jailed or executed. The trade unions have been smashed. Not a single opposition newspaper or publication is permitted. The sad condition of civil liberties is summed up in the introduction of forced labor penalties and concentration camps. Anarchists, pacifists, Trotskyists, and other varieties of socialists are being "remolded" by labor and brainwashing. And judging by the statements of black nationalists, such as Stokely Carmichael and Robert Williams, who sought asylum in Cuba, there is even some discrimination based on color and race.

One aspect of Castroism, above all, has enjoyed a worldwide impact. Tragically, this aspect has been seized upon and imitated,

often as parody, by some of the student and other youthful rebels here and in Europe. Draper summed it up in a prescient sentence: "Its most distinguishing characteristic has been an immanent violence which turns inward as readily as outward."³⁴ The elevation of violence and war as instruments of social change is hardly new in political philosophy. But Castro raised it to a very high level indeed. His apotheosis of violent revolution, pronounced in an address to the Tricontinental Conference of January 16, 1966, has been picked up wherever middle-class revolutionaries despair of the great organizational and political efforts required to change the world. He reminded the delegates that "the duty of every revolutionary is to effect the revolution . . . in deed, not in word. . . ." He called upon revolutionaries to spend less time on theory and to act on the premise "that sooner or later all, or almost all the peoples, will have to take up arms to liberate themselves. . . . We believe that on this continent, in the case of all or almost all peoples, the battle will have to take on the most violent forms."

In his February 6, 1966 statement taking the Chinese Communists to task, Castro cited his militant bona fides to refute the Chinese accusations of revisionism:

We speak in the name of a people who did not hesitate—for the sake of the strength of the revolutionary movement, for the sake of the socialist camp . . . to risk the dangers of thermonuclear war . . . when in our country and in our territory—with full and absolute right, which we have not renounced and . . . of which we shall never repent—we agreed to the installation of strategic thermonuclear missiles in our territory! Moreover, not only did we agree to having them brought in, we disagreed with their removal! I believe this is a secret to no one.

Castro's comrade-in-arms, Che Guevara, has come to epitomize the spirit of violence even more than Castro. The Guevara-Castro theory of guerrilla warfare is based on a re-

³³ Quoted in *ibid.*, p. 164.

³⁴ Draper, *Castroism*, p. 221.

versal of Marxism—*creating* the conditions of revolution by organizing insurrections. When Guevara put the theory to the test in Bolivia he faced a rather formidable obstacle, more important than the CIA or the Bolivian armed forces, namely, the refusal of the people to rally to his support. What a strange denouement, for a movement that insists on describing itself as Marxist, is contained in this diary entry by Guevara, dated April 30, 1967:

On another plane: the isolation continues to be complete, sicknesses have undermined the health of some comrades, forcing us to divide forces, which has greatly diminished our effectiveness. As yet we have been unable to establish contact with Joaquin. The peasant base has not yet been developed although it appears that through planned terror we can neutralize some of them; support will come later. Not one enlistment has been obtained. . . .³⁵

Whether this prophet of violence, Guevara, met his death because that other prophet of violence, Castro, refused to send him aid, as the Maoists of Bolivia charge, is beyond the scope of this article.³⁶

AMONG THE NUMEROUS MOVEMENTS and ideologies claiming descent from Marxism, Castroism seems the most maverick of all. Draper has called it a "do-it-yourself" version of Marxism-Leninism; his description is apt. There is no resemblance in fundamental qualities between Castro's Cuba as it actually exists and the ideal of Marx, "an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." Castro's Cuba is related to Lenin insofar as it uproots an old, decaying regime and estab-

lishes a new dictatorship; it is related to Stalin, insofar as that new dictatorship bears essential features of a totalitarian state. But insofar as Castro's Cuba plays an independent and maverick role within the Communist world, it has elements of historical novelty. Internally, however, it maintains the saddest single thread running through all Communist societies—suppression of liberty, regimentation of persons.

Castroism has exercised a notable influence on the militant student and middle-class rebels of Europe and America, partly because it sheds a romantic glow (best preserved by refraining from a careful examination of its domestic realities) and partly because it responds to their sense of impatience. Confronted by military and political forces that flout the popular will and persist in waging an unconscionable war in Vietnam, youthful rebels are often drawn to an extreme, sometimes adventuristic course of action, one they hope will produce immediate results. Castro and Guevara appeared on the historical scene with a successful revolution and a theory to go with it: revolution made to order, anywhere. All that is needed are men with courage and will who refuse compromise. That such a revolution, in the rare instance where it succeeds, quickly becomes institutionalized as a one-party dictatorship is a lesson some learn too late.

The overthrow of Batista was an important event in the real revolution of modern times—the prolonged, interrupted, but fundamental sequence of historical action against oppression and for the achievement of democracy. The overwhelming support Castro received at first was understandable in the light of his promise of freedom. When he turned from that promise in order to establish another tyranny, he earned the description—a revolution betrayed. But it remains just possible that the free-wheeling and maverick style of the regime may lead to internal events facilitating a return to the course of 1959. We will see.

³⁵ *The Complete Bolivian Diaries of Che Guevara and Other Captured Documents*, ed. and Introduction by Daniel James (New York: Stein and Day, 1969), p. 151.

³⁶ "Bolivian CP (M-L) Rebuts Castro," by Oscar Zamora, in *World Revolution*, January-March 1969.

Generation Gap—Cuban Style

The Minister of Education tried persuasion, tried reasoning with some of these youngsters, tried to advise them. Very well. But, of course, advice alone is not sufficient. If they don't understand persuasion, then they will have to understand another kind of procedure. . . . Those youngsters will be educated or reeducated; those cases will be treated the way they should be treated, but we will reeducate them above all through work, which is the best method of education.

THESE words sound familiar. They might have been spoken by an American parent or politician, but they weren't. They are the words of Fidel Castro.

He is referring to a recent phenomenon in Cuban culture, repugnant to most of Cuban society, though not unfamiliar to the American eye. They are young. They wear long hair and mini-skirts. They practice free love and smoke marijuana. They roam in gangs through an area of Havana known as La Rampa, the Cuban version of San Francisco's Haight-Ashbury. The names of the gangs range from *Los Sicadélicos* (the psychedelics) to *Los Niños de las Flores* (the flower children). Their motto is "Do what you want, any way, when you want—right now."

They are hippies, and a thorn in the side of the Cuban government. They are called *enfermitos*, the little sick ones (also in Cuban slang "the little groovy ones").

The official youth newspaper, *Juventud Rebelde*, carried an article on October 12, 1968, which stated:

They are eccentric in appearance. Long hair and very tight trousers on the boys; extremely short skirts on the girls. All wear strange necklaces and their minds are full of fantastic ideas. . . . Above all, they irritate those who, still stained with grease or dirt after a day's work, cannot hide their disgust or dislike for them.

Contrary to popular stereotypes, the Cuba Revolution glorifies work. Work has

the same holy aura in Marxism as in the Protestant ethic. Seeing young people who neither work nor go to school is very annoying to those who have worked to build the Revolution, including Prime Minister Castro.

Where do the Cubans place the blame? On the imperialists, of course. They

. . . become vehicles for Yankee propaganda with which they win over other young people who join them, some out of curiosity, others for the adventure and, in general, for the sexual attraction which has been put out as "bait."

The irony of it. Their American counterparts are accused of being Communists; they are called counterrevolutionaries. Their American counterparts enshrine posters of Che Guevara on their walls, youngsters in Cuba tear them down. While American youth applauds Cuba for its forward strides in public education, 22 percent of Cubans between 6 and 16 refuse to go to school. Of these, half are between 12 and 15. (Compulsory education was established in the first place to ward off the threat of American subversion, which is now seen as more cultural than military.) In America marijuana is a symbol of rebellion; so, too, in Cuba, where its possession carries a 30-year jail sentence.

Just how Cuban youth came under the spell of international youth culture is hard to say. Many Cubans have studied in Eastern Europe, where this style has been prevalent

among students for years. A good many European, particularly French, movies are shown in Cuba. American hippies make frequent pilgrimages to "the free territory of the Americas." And, of course, it is impossible to stop people from listening to American radio stations so near the U.S. "Guantanamera" may have been a big hit in the States, but in Cuba it is strictly the Beatles.

Worshipping one another's heroes is not surprising; the grass being greener etc. Young Cubans desire material affluence and personal freedom; America has it. Young Americans desire spiritual strength and personal commitment; Cuba is seen as a symbol of it. All are seeking freedom, an elusive quality, hard to define.

HIPPIES IN AMERICA, while not always approved of, are usually tolerated. But in Cuba revolutionary zeal allows little tolerance. After describing the takeover of La Rampa, the article in *Juventud Rebelde* goes on:

One night an end was put to all of this. . . . The confused persons, ideally youngsters who neither study nor work, will be transformed into useful citizens through a special re-education based on work and study.

Those who could be caught were rounded up and are probably at this moment undergoing "re-education." But can even the Cuban government stop this movement? If Fidel speaks of hundreds, there are probably thousands.

Another Cuban formula for dealing with rebellious youth is standard in America. Said one Cuban mother, "I tried to get him into the Service, but he was never called. . . ." It appears that in both countries the military service is looked upon as the place to make upstanding citizens out of socially undesirable beings. All Cubans from 14 to 16 who do not work or go to school will now be placed in the military. Meanwhile, American idolators of Cuba continue to demonstrate against the draft here.

The Cuban Revolution is fiercely moral-

istic. The "new man" is to be a dedicated worker with a marked absence of frivolity and self-indulgence. Difficult as it is for American youth to believe, the Revolution officially despises the regalia of the new international youth mystique. To quote from an official radio broadcast of March 7, 1968:

They wear tighter pants every day and they let their bangs grow longer until they look like girls. We could say that these are the new men of a bankrupt universe. They are the ones who like to sing and dance to modern music. A Yankee rhythm is imported so they can dance their epileptic dances. . . . The miniskirt, a type of urban bikini, is another of the styles we import with the greatest shamelessness. . . . We believe salacious or indecent language has no place in a good film or in books. We believe that the new world will have no quarrel with aesthetic values and we do not believe that it will prevent people from dressing well, properly, and decently.

IN AMERICA, the Che and Fidel cult, like beads and exaggerated locks, is partly a fad. Few young Americans have any notion of what these men really stand for, except a vague impression of them as an ultimate symbol of rebellion.

It is doubtful that their Cuban mirror-images know any more about the real U.S. than young Americans know about the real Cuba. It is all part of a movement, a mind-shattering, apolitical, international movement of young people in virtually every developed or developing country. It spreads without aid of treaties. It has no ambassadors. It needs no ideology. It is youth doing its own thing and ignoring the squabbles of its elders. They are disorganized, but together against a factionalized political world. A 16-year-old American would find more in common with a 16-year-old Cuban than with a 40-year-old American. A world that was once divided vertically into nations is now divided horizontally into generations, and even Fidel Castro, idol of American youth, is not free from the burden of "generation gap."

Three by Zamyatin

A NOTE ON ZAMYATIN In 1924, in an autobiographical sketch, Yevgeny Zamyatin (1884–1937) wrote of his student days, “I was a Bolshevik then (today I am not).”

In 1914 Tsarist authorities suppressed Zamyatin's novella *At the World's End*, which satirized the life of a provincial army post, and brought him to trial on charges of maligning the Russian officer corps.

Throughout the 1920s Communist writers and critics hounded Zamyatin for his refusal to conform to their notion of the duties of an artist in revolutionary society. In the face of growing repression he insisted on intellectual and artistic freedom. In an increasingly monolithic state based on rigid and inviolate dogma, he dared to preach continual change and the relativity of all truths. “In art, the surest way to destroy,” he wrote in “*The New Russian Prose*” in 1924, “is to canonize one given form and one philosophy.” He struck out at what he regarded as the subversion of the revolution's goals. He challenged every dictum by which the rulers sought to consolidate and justify the total dominance of what, in his novel *We*, he prophetically called “the Single State.” There were not many who saw so clearly and spoke so strongly in warning against the onrushing dark age.

Zamyatin's program at all times was “*In Defense of Man*.” His tools were satire and dissent. Writer, critic, playwright, editor, teacher, and one of the most articulate spokesmen for heresy, he was too dangerous to be tolerated.

In the late 1920s, when the RAPP (Russian Association of Proletarian Writers) became virtual dictator of Soviet literature and proceeded to establish a monopoly of party-dominated art, Zamyatin was one of the principal targets of attack. Mercilessly vilified, he was denied all access to publication—unless, like most of his less courageous colleagues, he recanted his sins. “We must preserve our publishing houses,” wrote the *Literary Gazette*, “but not for the Zamyatins.”

In 1931 Zamyatin wrote his famous letter to Stalin, asking to be allowed to leave Russia,

“with the right to return as soon as it becomes possible in our country to serve great ideas in literature without cringing before little men, as soon as there is at least a partial change in the prevailing view concerning the role of the literary artist.” In this letter Zamyatin wrote:

“I know that among the works I wrote during the first three or four years after the Revolution there were some that might provide a pretext for attacks. I know that I have a highly inconvenient habit of speaking what I consider to be the truth rather than saying what may be expedient at the moment. I have never concealed my attitude toward literary servility, fawning, and chameleon changes of color . . . I raised this problem in one of my articles (published in the journal *Dom iskusstv* . . .) in a form that many people found sharp and offensive, and this served as a signal for the launching of a newspaper and magazine campaign against me. This campaign has continued, on different pretexts, to this day.”

The three essays that follow * are eloquent examples of Zamyatin's “inconvenient habit” of fearlessly speaking his mind. They deal with one of his major concerns—the role of the artist in society. Because his thought always rose above the specifics of the moment, they speak as validly and pertinently today as they did at the time they were written.

The essay published in *Dom iskusstv*, which appeared in January 1921, is “*I am Afraid*.” “*Tomorrow*” appeared in a collection *In Defense of Man*, published in Petersburg in 1919. The date of “*The Goal*” is uncertain, but internal evidence points to the mid-1920s. It was never published in Soviet Russia and first appeared in Russian in *Litsa*, a collection of Zamyatin's essays published by the Chekhov Publishing House in New York in 1955.

MIRRA GINSBURG

* From the forthcoming book, *A Soviet Heretic: Essays by Yevgeny Zamyatin*, edited and translated by Mirra Ginsburg, to be published by the University of Chicago Press. Copyright © 1970 by The University of Chicago.

Tomorrow

EVERY TODAY is at the same time both a cradle and a shroud: a shroud for yesterday, a cradle for tomorrow. Today, yesterday, and tomorrow are equally near to one another, and equally far. They are generations, they are grandfathers, fathers, and grandsons. And the grandsons invariably love and hate the fathers; the fathers invariably hate and love the grandfathers.

Today is doomed to die—because yesterday died, and because tomorrow will be born. Such is the wise and cruel law. Cruel, because it condemns to eternal dissatisfaction those who already today see the distant peaks of tomorrow; wise, because eternal dissatisfaction is the only pledge of eternal movement forward, eternal creation. He who has found his ideal today is, like Lot's wife, already turned into a pillar of salt, has already sunk into the earth and does not move ahead. The world is kept alive only by heretics: the heretic Christ, the heretic Copernicus, the heretic Tolstoy. Our symbol of faith is heresy: tomorrow is inevitably heresy to today, which has turned into a pillar of salt, and to yesterday, which has scattered to dust. Today denies yesterday, but is a denial of denial tomorrow. This is the constant dialectic path which in a grandiose parabola sweeps the world into infinity. Yesterday, the thesis; today, the antithesis; and tomorrow, the synthesis.

Yesterday there was a tsar, and there were slaves; today there is no tsar, but the slaves remain; tomorrow there will be only

tsars. We march in the name of tomorrow's free man—the royal man. We have lived through the epoch of suppression of the masses; we are living in an epoch of suppression of the individual in the name of the masses; tomorrow will bring the liberation of the individual—in the name of man. Wars, imperialist and civil, have turned man into material for warfare, into a number, a cipher. Man is forgotten, for the sake of the sabbath. We want to recall something else to mind: that the sabbath is for man.

The only weapon worthy of man—of tomorrow's man—is the word. With the word, the Russian intelligentsia and Russian literature have fought for decades for the great human tomorrow. And today it is time to raise this weapon once again. Man is dying. The proud *Homo erectus* is dropping to all fours, is growing fangs and fur; the beast takes ascendancy in man. The brutal Middle Ages are returning, the value of human life is falling precipitously, a new wave of European pogroms is rolling on. It is impossible to be silent any longer. It is time to cry out: man is brother to man!

We call the Russian intelligentsia to the defense of man, and of human values. We appeal, not to those who reject today in the name of a return to yesterday, not to those who are hopelessly deafened by today; we appeal to those who see the distant tomorrow—and judge today in the name of tomorrow, in the name of man.

1919–20

I Am Afraid

I AM AFRAID that we preserve too fondly too much of what we have inherited from the palaces. Take these gilded chairs—yes, surely, they must be preserved: they are so graceful, they embrace so tenderly

any rear end deposited in them. And it may, perhaps, be true that court poets resemble the exquisite gilded chairs in their grace and tenderness. But is it not a mistake to preserve the institution of court poets with as

much solicitude as we preserve the gilded chairs? After all, only the palaces remain; the court is no longer here.

I am afraid that we are too kind, and that the French Revolution was more ruthless in destroying everything connected with the court. On the eleventh day of Messidor, in 1794, Payan, chairman of the Commission on Public Education, issued a decree, which stated, among other things:

We have a multitude of nimble authors, who keep a constant eye on the latest trend; they know the fashion and color of the given season; they know when it is time to don the red cap, and when to discard it. . . . As a result, they merely corrupt and degrade art. True genius creates thoughtfully and embodies its ideas in bronze, but mediocrity, hiding under the aegis of freedom, snatches a fleeting triumph in its name and plucks the flowers of ephemeral success.

With this contemptuous decree, the French Revolution guillotined the masquerading court poets. But we offer the writings of these "nimble authors, who know when to don the red cap, and when to discard it," when to sing hail to the tsar, and when to the hammer and sickle—we offer them to the people as a literature worthy of the revolution. And the literary centaurs rush, kicking and crushing one another, in a race for the splendid prize—the monopoly on the scribbling of odes, the monopoly on the knightly pursuit of slinging mud at the intelligentsia. I am afraid Payan was right—this merely corrupts and degrades art. And I am afraid that, if this continues, the entire recent period in Russian literature will become known in history as the age of the nimble school, for those who are not nimble have been silent now for the past two years.

And what was contributed to literature by those who were not silent?

The nimblest of all were the Futurists. Without a moment's pause, they proclaimed themselves the court school. And for a year we heard nothing but their yellow, green, and raspberry red triumphant cries. How-

ever, the combination of the red sansculotte cap with the yellow blouse and yesterday's still visible blue flower on the cheek proved too blasphemously glaring even for the least demanding. The Futurists were politely shown the door by those in whose name these self-appointed heralds galloped. Futurism disappeared. And as before, a single beacon rises amid the tin-flat Futurist sea—Mayakovsky. Because he is not one of the nimble. He sang the revolution when others, sitting in Petersburg, were firing their long-range verses at Berlin. But even this magnificent beacon is still burning with the old reserves of his "I" and "Simple as Lowing." In the "Heroes and Victims of the Revolution," in "Doughnuts" and the poem about the peasant woman and Wrangel, it is no longer the same Mayakovsky, the Edison, the pioneer whose every step was hacked out in the jungle. From the jungle he has come out upon the well-trodden highway; he has dedicated himself to perfecting official themes and rhythms. But, then, why not? Edison, too, perfected Bell's invention.

The "horsism" of the Moscow Imaginists is too obviously weighed down by the cast-iron shadow of Mayakovsky. No matter how they exert themselves to smell bad and to shout, they will not outsmell and outshout Mayakovsky. The Imaginist America, alas, has been discovered long before. Back in the era of Serafino, one who considered himself the greatest of poets wrote:

"Were I not fearful of disturbing the air of your modesty with a golden cloud of honors, I could not have refrained from decking the windows of the edifice of fame with the bright vestments with which the hands of praise adorn the backs of names that are the portion of superior beings" (Letter from Pietro Aretino to the Duchess of Urbino). "The hands of praise," "the backs of names"—isn't this Imaginism? An excellent and pungent means—the image—has become an end in itself; the cart pulls the horse.

The proletarian writers and poets are diligently trying to be aviators astride a loco-

motive. The locomotive huffs and puffs sincerely and assiduously, but it does not look as if it can rise aloft. With small exceptions (such as Mikhail Volkov of the Moscow "Smithy"), all the practitioners of proletarian culture have the most revolutionary content and the most reactionary form. The Proletcult art is, thus far, a step back, to the 1860s. And I am afraid that the airplanes from among the nimble will always outstrip the honest locomotives and, "hiding under the aegis of freedom," will snatch a fleeting triumph in its name.

Fortunately, the masses have a keener nose than they are given credit for. And therefore, the triumph of the nimble is only momentary. Thus, the fleeting triumph of the Futurists, and the equally fleeting triumph of Kluyev, after his patriotic verses about the base Wilhelm and his enthusiasm over the "rebuff in decrees" and the machine gun (a ravishing rhyme: *machine-gunning* and *honey!*). And even this brief measure of success was apparently denied to Gorodetsky: at the evening in the Duma hall he had a cool reception, and his own evening at the House of the Arts was attended by fewer than ten people.

And the nonnimble are silent. Blok's "Twelve" struck two years ago—and after the last, twelfth stroke, Blok fell silent. Barely noticed, the "Scythians" rushed, long ago, down the dark, trolleyless streets. Last year's *Zapiski mechtateley* [Notes of dreamers],¹ published by Alkonost, are but a dim solitary glimmer in the dark yesterday. And in them, we hear Andrey Bely complaining:

The conditions under which we live are tearing us to pieces. The writer often collapses under the burden of work that is alien to him. For months, he has no opportunity to concentrate and finish an uncompleted phrase. Frequently of late the author has asked himself whether anyone needs him—that is, whether anyone needs *Petersburg* or

The Silver Dove. Perhaps he is needed only as a teacher of "poetic science"? If so, he would immediately put down his pen and try to find a job as a street cleaner, rather than violate his soul by surrogates of literary activity.

Yes, this is one of the reasons for the silence of true literature. The writer who cannot be nimble must trudge to an office with a briefcase if he wants to stay alive. In our day, Gogol would be running with a briefcase to the Theater Section; Turgenev would undoubtedly be translating Balzac and Flaubert for World Literature; Herten would lecture to the sailors of the Baltic fleet; and Chekhov would be working for the Commissariat of Public Health. Otherwise—to live as a student did five years ago on his forty rubles—Gogol would have to write four *Inspector Generals* a month, Turgenev would have to turn out three *Fathers and Sons* every two months, and Chekhov would have to produce a hundred stories every month. This sounds like a preposterous joke, but unfortunately it is not a joke; these are realistic figures. The work of a literary artist, who "embodies his ideas in bronze" with pain and joy, and the work of a prolific windbag—the work of Chekhov and that of Breshko-Breshkovsky—are today appraised in the same way: by the yard, by the sheet. And the writer faces the choice: either he becomes a Breshko-Breshkovsky or he is silent. To the genuine writer or poet the choice is clear.

But even this is not the main thing. Russian writers are accustomed to going hungry. The main reason for their silence is not lack of bread or lack of paper; the reason is far weightier, far tougher, far more ironclad. It is that true literature can exist only where it is created, not by diligent and trustworthy officials, but by madmen, hermits, heretics, dreamers, rebels and skeptics. But when a writer must be sensible and rigidly orthodox, when he must make himself useful today, when he cannot lash out at everyone, like Swift, or smile at every-

¹ Series of anthologies of the Symbolist group, published by the Alkonost publishing house in 1919–22.

thing, like Anatole France, there can be no bronze literature, there can be only a paper literature, a newspaper literature, which is read today, and used for wrapping soap tomorrow.

Those who are trying to build a new culture in our extraordinary time often turn their eyes to the distant past—to the stadium, the theater, the games of the Athenian demos. The retrospection is correct. But it must not be forgotten that the Athenian *agora*, the Athenian people, knew how to listen to more than odes; it had no fear of the harsh scourge of Aristophanes either. And we—how far we are from Aristophanes when even the

utterly innocuous *Toiler of Wordstreams* by Gorky is withdrawn from the repertory to shield that foolish infant, the Russian demos, from temptation!

I am afraid that we shall have no genuine literature until we cease to regard the Russian demos as a child whose innocence must be protected. I am afraid that we shall have no genuine literature until we cure ourselves of this new brand of Catholicism, which is as fearful as the old of every heretical word. And if this sickness is incurable, then I am afraid that the only future possible to Russian literature is its past.

1921

The Goal

ALL OF OUR LITERATURE is still permeated by the poisons of war. It is built on hatred—on class hatred, its components, its surrogates. It is not possible to build on negative emotions. Genuine literature will come only when we replace hatred for man with love for man. True, our age is a cruel, iron age; true, it is an age of wars and rebellions. But this is why a respite from hatred is all the more necessary—for hatred has a destructive effect upon the human psyche. What comes after the abolition of classes is not a time of automatic equality, of sheer animal well-being, but a time of enormous upsurge of the highest human emotions, a time of love.

Yet, what our future will be depends on us. For the moment, we give no thought to fostering the high emotions which belong to an era when collectivism is being realized. Edicts, resolutions, paragraphs: trees—and no wood behind the trees. What can excite the imagination in “The ABC of Politics”? Nothing.

“Art has always served the ruling classes.”

This dictum might waken the enthusiasm of a fascist, an imperialist, but not a revolutionary, not a *dialectician*. The entire difference in the nature of the present ruling class is that it rules *temporarily*, that it rules in order to cease ruling as soon as possible—in order to free mankind of the yoke of any state and any rule. The difference is that the present ruling class knows (should know, I feel) all this. Yet this is precisely what is being lost sight of.

The germ of the future is always in the present.

It is true that artists of every kind—the majority of artists—have always been unprincipled and corrupted by skepticism. The majority of them have always been lance-knights, mercenaries who sold themselves to the highest bidder. But this law of buying and selling talent is a law of capitalist society. A society planning to rebuild life on different, new, nobler foundations can no more accept this shameful law than it can accept without objection the sale of their bodies by women. From my (heretical) point of view,

a stubborn, unyielding enemy is far more deserving of respect than a sudden convert to communism—such as Sergey Gorodetsky, to take one example. The spectacle of service to the ruling class based on the advantages accruing from such service should certainly provoke no jubilation in a revolutionary. A revolutionary should be nauseated by such “service,” which quite naturally degenerates into a lackey’s servility. This can please only such typical products of the transitional period, entirely devoid of a sense of smell, as Gorbachev or Lelevich; and, perhaps, men like Averbakh, who are not very far removed from them.¹

What these young men have in their hands is not pen and ink, but a whip and a piece of roast beef. Basically, their criticism reduces itself to the command: “Sit up and beg!” To them, a writer is merely a mutt who must be taught to stand on his hind legs—then he is given a morsel of meat, and everything is just fine.

No, my dearest comrades, it is not *just fine*. The Revolution does not need dogs who “sit up” in expectation of a handout or because they fear the whip. Nor does it need trainers of such dogs. It needs writers who fear nothing—just as the Revolution fears nothing. It needs writers who do not seek immediate benefits—just as the Revolution does not seek immediate benefits (it is not by chance that it teaches us to sacrifice everything, even life, for the sake of the happiness of future generations: this is its ethic). It needs writers in whom the Revolution awakens a true, organic echo. And it does not matter if this echo is individual in every writer. It does not matter if a writer ignores such-and-such a paragraph adopted at such-and-such a conference. What matters is that

his work be sincere, that it lead the reader forward instead of back, that it disturb the reader rather than reassure and lull his mind.

But where forward? And how far forward? In the answer to these questions we find the basic error of the majority of today’s critics and the majority of writers who are obediently following critics incapable of thinking dialectically.

We feel that the correct answer to these questions should be: the farther the better, the more valuable. Reduction of prices, better sanitation in the cities, tractorization of the village—all this is very good; it is, naturally, a movement forward. I can imagine an excellent newspaper article on these topics (an article that will be forgotten the next day). But I find it difficult to imagine a work by Lev Tolstoy or Romain Rolland based on improvement of sanitation. I find it difficult to imagine readers truly, deeply moved by such a sanitary Tolstoy.

It is time, at last, to understand that the stubborn limitation of writers to the area of “minor affairs” creates only a philistine, subservient literature, and nothing more. It is time to understand that literature, like science, is divided into major and minor branches, each with its own tasks. There is a firm division of surgery into “major” and “minor.” “Major surgery” carries science forward; “minor surgery” fulfills daily, current needs. “Major surgery” conducts the

¹ G. E. Gorbachev (1897–1942), G. Lelevich (1901–45) and L. L. Averbakh (1903–?) were Communist critics who demanded strict control of literature and total subservience of art to the aims of the party. As head of the RAPP, Averbakh was virtual dictator of Soviet literature from 1929 to 1932, subjecting nonconformist writers to vicious persecution. He disappeared during the Great Purge in the 1930s.

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experiments of Carrel and Voronoff; "minor surgery" bandages a sprained arm. Astronomy is divided into major and minor: the former seeks to determine the course of the solar system; the latter recommends methods of determining a ship's position at sea. If we compel Carrel to bandage sprains, we shall obtain one more male nurse; of course, this would be useful, but stupid, for in gaining a male nurse, humanity would lose a scientific genius.

Our criticism is pushing Russian literature today into the role of male nurse; the name of the sickness that afflicts Russian literature is malenursism. No wonder Marietta Shaginyan (whom all the Gorbachevs have recently invested with the formal title of "Left Fellow Traveler") lost patience and cried out in her book, *Daily Life and Art*, that one of the reasons why "the writer is sick" is lack of "projections of the future." She made a single mistake: this is not one of the reasons, but the only reason to which, broadly speaking, all the others reduce themselves.

The purpose of art, including literature, is not to reflect life but to organize it, to build it. (For the task of reflecting life there is a minor art—photography.) What does it mean for literature to "organize life"? Averbakh understands it thus: "Dairy coopera-

tion in a peasant country is a matter of enormous importance. Dairy cooperation will be the topic of the works of new writers, because it is a matter of the social experience of the new epoch." This sounds like a malicious anecdote, but this malicious anecdote, mocking Averbakh, was invented—for the edification of posterity—by Averbakh himself.

Dairy cooperation—when it is the concern of a specialist, not Averbakh—is a most estimable matter. It may be a tiny step, to be measured perhaps in centimeters, but a step, nevertheless, to a given future—one of a million means toward the attainment of our goal. It is the specialist's task to talk about means, about centimeters. An artist's task is to talk about the goal, about kilometers, thousands of kilometers. The organizing role of art consists of infecting the reader, of arousing him with pathos or irony—the cathode and anode in literature. But irony that is measured in centimeters is pathetic, and centimeter-sized, dairy-cooperative pathos is ridiculous. No one can be carried away by it. To stir the reader, the artist must speak not of means but of ends, of the great goal toward which mankind is moving.

1926(?)

Misuses of Civil Disobedience

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE is often hailed as an eloquent method of protest, a way of arousing the moral conscience of society. But today it can also be used by some students and black militants as a weapon in an assault on democratic institutions.

A strong case can be made for certain forms of civil disobedience, particularly in a democracy, when one is attempting to arouse public sympathy for a just cause. However, we have recently suffered from serious confusions about this matter. There is ambiguity about the meaning of "civil disobedience"; there is confusion about the proper use of the act and under what conditions it may be justifiably applied. Many actions performed in the name of civil disobedience have been improperly designated as such; a widespread misuse of civil disobedience by sincere though misguided democrats may inadvertently contribute to undermining democratic society.

AS A GENERAL WORKING DEFINITION, I would suggest the following: *Civil disobedience applies to the civil law. It involves a deliberate and open violation of the law. It is founded in high moral intent, whose purpose is to arouse the conscience of the community in order to correct any injustice within the framework of (democratic) law.*

In this definition, certain elements are essential:

(1) *Breaking the civil law:* Civil disobedience should not be confused with academic disobedience (where students disobey the rules and regulations of the university), nor with corporate disobedience (where they dis-

obey the internal procedures within the corporation), nor ecclesiastical disobedience (where civil disobedients violate the rules of their order or the commandments of their bishops). It is civil, because it applies to the civil law. It involves an act of disobedience, a violation of the law. It should apply not to those who simply preach and advocate or recommend violation, but only to those who have some complicity in or have actually committed an overt act of violation. Advocacy of noncompliance with the draft laws by Spock, Coffin, et. al. does not seem to be civil disobedience; at least, I would hope that their action may be considered a case of free speech, and that the Supreme Court will so rule.

(2) *Deliberate and intentional:* The act must be deliberate and intentional. That is, it must follow from a conscious and voluntary purpose on the part of the agent involved. If one is opposed to all stop signs in principle and makes a deliberate display of his contempt, then one is civilly disobedient. But if one accidentally, mistakenly, or without forethought passes a stop sign, he cannot be considered civilly disobedient.

(3) *High Moral purpose:* To be civilly disobedient, the action should follow from a high moral purpose and have as its goal the remedy of a significant injustice. Generally the civil disobedient appeals to fundamental moral principles that he thinks are being flouted. His interest is serious, not whimsical; he considers the issue to be momentous, not trivial. There are considerable difficulties with this criterion; for what may be considered to be momentous for one person—compulsory vaccination for his

children—may be insignificant for another. Still, one must try to distinguish those acts that follow from a high moral purpose and those that do not. Recently, students in a university blocked the entrance to the cafeteria because they protested the bad quality of the food. This, one might think, would hardly qualify as a protest of a moral injustice—through a gourmet may think so.

(4) *To influence public opinion:* The strategy of civil disobedience within a democracy is to awaken the consciences of others to some grave moral crime or social inequity. The tactic being employed is moral suasion. One hopes that public attitudes may be redirected in order to influence leaders to modify policies. The technique of civil disobedience is essentially dramatic. One cannot obey, and one hopes an act of indignation will stimulate sympathy for one's cause.

(5) *Openly declared:* To have the maximum effect upon public opinion, civil disobedience should be openly declared in advance. Some notice of the action should be given and the civil authorities forewarned. Civilly disobedient acts against the law which are called for at any time and in any place tend to disrupt the public order, and if generalized may lead to a complete breakdown in law. Declarations of intent made in advance most likely have the maximum effect upon public opinion—to show that one is a civil disobedient, but for serious reasons. If not made in advance, at least the act should be open and public.

(6) *Penalty and punishment:* A civil disobedient should be willing to take upon himself in a responsible way the consequences of his act. If there is a legal rule with stated penalties for infraction, then one must be prepared to suffer the punishment that may ensue. Openly to break a law and then to demand immunity or amnesty, as some have, is to violate the whole spirit of civil disobedience. Some students who have

broken civil laws in their demonstrations (not simply academic regulations) have cried "foul" when civil proceedings were instituted. Yet to claim the role of both judge and accused is to attack the very foundation of law and make it dependent upon opinion or force; in which case it no longer has the generality and stability law requires. The essence of law in a democracy is that laws should ultimately be based upon public sovereignty, and that such laws (which apply to everyone) must be legally enacted or judicially determined. To flout them without due process is to invalidate the legal structure of society.

One key point: If violence is used by the civil disobedient against other citizens, those so injured have a right to demand that *their* safety be ensured by the police. Not to afford them elementary protection is to deny them equal protection by the law. If the civil disobedient is to be protected, so are those who may be injured if and when his disobedience becomes violent. A civil disobedient within a democracy who is committed to the methods of democratic persuasion cannot maintain this commitment, itself the very basis on which he asks toleration for his act of civil disobedience, while at the same time refusing to abide by its penalties. I am not arguing that there ought to be a harsh meting out of punishment. On the contrary, if the issue is a grave moral one, equity and justice ought to enter and full judicial due process be adhered to, so that the rights of the civil disobedient are protected. The civil disobedient wishes to change the law or policy, but until he does he must abide by the existing rules or the legal statutes, including the penalties required.

(7) *A responsible act within the democratic framework of laws:* This presupposes some commitment to the basic framework of laws in a democracy. If one acts from impatience and passion, if his acts are uncivil and irresponsible toward the whole body of law, then he cannot command moral

approval. If he asks that his point of view be respected, his rights scrupulously maintained, and his beliefs tolerated, this means that he himself is committed to the fundamental rules of democracy. But if he is opposed to the whole system, believing it perversely corrupt and defective, then we must ask if his indictment also applies to the political and legal system, including the principles of democracy.

We must here distinguish the socioeconomic system from the political and legal system. For one may wish radically to restructure the former, yet still be committed to the democratic process as the chief method of social change. If one is totally against the political and legal democratic framework, then his acts are acts not of civil disobedience *per se*, but of resistance and revolution; and his goal is not to change a particular law or laws, but all law. In such a case, he has broken the implicit contractual obligation that he has to others or he expects from them. As Hobbes pointed out, he has no right to expect anything but a "war of all against all," and civil disobedience is then debased to merely one tactic in the arsenal of weapons. He can no longer claim civil disobedience as an "inalienable" right. Clearly, this discussion only applies to civil disobedience in a democracy.

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE cannot be equated with every act of breaking the law.

(a) For, as we have seen, civil disobedience does not include acts of violation that are involuntary or inadvertent.

(b) It does not include covert evasions of the law. Income tax evasion, blackmail, or homosexual acts performed in private cannot be construed as bona fide cases of civil disobedience. Vivien Kellems's famous refusal to collect withholding taxes some years ago as an act of protest was a case of civil disobedience; but the mere failure to pay one's own income tax is not.

Similarly, one may be opposed in principle

to laws against abortion, yet to evade the law by having an illegal abortion is not a case of civil disobedience. Whether or not one may in a democracy at times evade the law is a serious question. Although I submit that we have a *prima facie* obligation to obey the laws, there are some cases where the better part of wisdom is to evade them—as, for example, drinking whiskey in violation of prohibition. We will consider this question later.

(c) The civil challenge of the legality of a law or policy should not be interpreted as an instance of civil disobedience. In a democracy one may challenge a particular law by showing that it is inconsistent with the fundamental law (or common law) of the society. It is a peculiar feature of the U.S. legal system that generally only an aggrieved party can test the constitutionality of a law or policy. Acts done specifically with the intent of challenging a law are authentic democratic procedures. In 1961 Planned Parenthood in New Haven, Connecticut, made available birth control contraceptives and information as a deliberate test case of the constitutionality of the Connecticut Anti-Birth Control Law. Eventually the case made its way to the Supreme Court, where in 1965 the law was finally ruled unconstitutional. Similarly, in a sense, the freedom sit-ins in the South led by Martin Luther King and others were not pure cases of civil disobedience, but more often were efforts to strike down state segregation laws that violate the federal Constitution. In most cases, the aim was achieved; a Supreme Court ruling overturned the state law as unconstitutional. One could argue that a law should not have to be broken first in order to test its constitutionality. But be that as it may, such law-breaking is not civil disobedience; for the law itself is invalid. Civil disobedience applies rather to laws considered bad and needing to be repealed, or to those situations where it is thought that new laws should be enacted. Possibly it is even an effort to change community attitudes rather

than the law. It is possible, then, for a person to break a law because he thinks it unconstitutional and then proceed to litigation—yet he is not a civil disobedient.

Some cases are hard to classify. For example, opposition to the Vietnam war may be made on at least two grounds: one, that it is unconstitutional because the President did not request a declaration of war by the Congress, in which case those opposed to the war may be standing on their constitutional rights and hoping to provoke a legal test; two, that the war is immoral and violates international law and basic human rights. The second would be a case of civil disobedience. If in the first case a civil challenge were made and the Supreme Court should rule that the war was constitutional (i.e., the Tonkin Bay Resolution), and if the litigants still continued to break the law—for example by open violation of the draft—then this would again be a case of civil disobedience. In other words, civil disobedience applies to those cases in which laws legally enacted and constitutionally valid are still opposed because they are thought to be immoral.

(d) Civil disobedience must also be distinguished from deviations from normal duties and obligations, where they are legal. Jehovah's Witnesses have refused to salute the flag because it is contrary to their religious principles. The Supreme Court has ruled that in such cases individuals are exempt from the obligation—their deviant behavior is thus legally permissible.

Conscientious objection also is permitted as a basis for an exemption from the draft; and a qualified conscientious objector is *not* a civil disobedient. The United States has historically permitted conscientious objectors to be excluded from combatant service, if the opposition was predicated on belief in a Supreme Being. The grounds for conscientious objection have recently been liberally reinterpreted to apply to nontheists and humanists. Moreover, Judge

Charles Wyzanski's recent ruling in the Sisson case, which is likely to be heard by the Supreme Court, provides further arguments for the extension of conscientious objection to atheists. Under this interpretation, humanists and nontheists may qualify as conscientious objectors, as long as the grounds of their opposition function in their lives in the same way as those of orthodox theistic beliefs. The equal protection of the laws and religious freedom clauses apply to both nontheists and theists. At present, conscientious objection (whether broadly or narrowly construed) may be legally used to exempt someone from the draft. A conscientious objector, then, is *not* a civil disobedient. A draft dodger who secretly evades induction is also *not* a civil disobedient. A civil disobedient would be a person who does not legally qualify for conscientious objector status, yet openly and publicly refuses to be drafted in order to dramatize his opposition to war.

(e) Last, I think that we also should exclude from the heading of civil disobedience acts that are disruptive and obstructive and that prevent other people from exercising their rights. The claim of the civil disobedient to be heard is that the state has transgressed the bounds of human decency and has offended the most fundamental human rights. His act is an eloquent testament to the careful consideration that democrats are willing to give to his individual moral convictions and not to limit him—save in extreme and compelling situations.

A paradox occurs when an individual demands the right to be heard yet denies the same right to others; that is, when he physically prevents or obstructs another person from his liberty. One must bring to bear the full weight of John Stuart Mill's principle here: an individual has (within the limits of prudence) the right to his individual liberty, so long as he does not prevent others from exercising their individual rights to liberty. For we are asked to tolerate an in-

tolerant effort to limit or suppress the rights of other individuals. The civil disobedient here says: I have a keen and sensitive moral conscience; I condemn this or that; I hereby refuse to allow the right of dissent to those who may in equal moral fervor support a policy or law with which I disagree. Therefore, acts that overtly deny other individuals the freedom to express their convictions in action are no longer simple acts of civil disobedience but become forms of violent resistance.

An important change occurs in the concept of civil disobedience when it is transformed from the act of a free and independent moral agent to that of a group of people. It is one thing respectfully to tolerate a Henry David Thoreau as heretic and to be swayed by the integrity of his protest; it is another to deal with a crowd who exercises in unison active civil disobedience. The right to peacefully assemble, demonstrate, march, or protest is not at issue. These are often effective methods of moral suasion, and in a democracy are essential liberties that must be preserved at all costs. What is at issue are those forms of civilly disobedient acts that prevent other individuals, who may agree or disagree with the position of the civil disobedient, from entering or using buildings, and disruptions and confrontations that move beyond the level of dialogue to that of intimidation. One cannot in principle oppose sit-ins, so long as those who engage in them will not knowingly resist arrest or physically obstruct others. The responsible and orderly civil disobedient commands dignity and respect when he puts his body on the line in the name of a cause. His dignity can easily be translated into arrogance when he flaunts the rights of others, is intolerant of their convictions, and seeks to obstruct them in the process.

In doing so, he undermines the whole moral basis of the democratic faith: toleration and respect for the rights of others in terms of which his own claim to civil disobedience is predicated. To be told that

those whom the civil disobedients oppose are "moral primitives," and that their higher moral claim can censor or limit the rights of others, is a demand not for moral conscience but for moral "privilege." Those individuals who are being denied their elementary rights by such confrontations, as on the campuses today, must be protected by the law. And those who believe in both democracy and civil disobedience must appreciate the reasons why.

DOES THIS MEAN that I am rejecting civil disobedience as a method of persuasion in a democracy? On the contrary, I would insist that civil disobedience has a valid use in a democracy—within certain carefully defined limits. It is its possible misuses that ought to disturb us. The crucial question is: under what conditions, within what limitations, and in what form? No general position can anticipate every possible situation, especially where ambiguities are inherent and we do not have a backlog of experience. Yet some general considerations, I submit, are relevant.

The most serious consideration is whether the widespread adoption of civil disobedience would lead to the breakdown of the fabric of law and order and make the peaceful functioning of a democracy impossible. There may be an easy temptation for people in a democracy to stand on their moral consciences, but this may make subjective conscience the supreme arbiter of social policy with disastrous results. We must thus call for prudence, balance, temperance, and caution in the individual's use of civil disobedience.

At the crux of the matter here is a conflict between two kinds of obligation: a conflict between obligations to obey the law and to follow the dictates of individual conscience. This conflict between two competing claims has always been a vital question for political theory. It is the dilemma that Socrates faced in the dialogue, *Crito*, when, unjustly con-

demned to death by the Athenians, he wrestled with his conscience and the entreaties of his friends to escape. Socrates accepted the death penalty, which was duly carried out, because he thought that his obligation to the laws of Athens, to which he had adhered all of his life, superseded his private conscience and his conviction that the sentence was unjust.

One may dispute the wisdom of Socrates' decision. In a similar plight most men might have exercised their option to escape, particularly when the clear and present danger of death confronted them. In any case, the point is clear: law is not infallible and where an injustice is committed, particularly against an honorable person, one may make an exception in order to right a grievous wrong. Thus there is no absolute duty to obey the law. Indeed in some cases where laws are unjust, one can make a case, not only for civil disobedience, but for outright evasion and deception. This applies, it seems to me, to those restrictive abortion laws which place such an unfair burden on many individuals that in many cases the laws ought to be violated. Similarly, Eichmann was universally condemned for condoning bestial crimes against mankind; and his plea that he was merely "following orders" (legal in the Third Reich) falls on deaf ears. Many students think that we have reached a similar situation in Vietnam. The point is: laws are not absolute. There are exceptions to be made. Particularly in a democracy, we recognize at certain crucial moments in history the demands of the higher dictates of conscience.

Yet, if we do not have an absolute duty to obey the law, we do have a *prima facie* obligation, and on moral grounds. No society—democratic or nondemocratic—could function unless there were some acquiescence and compliance with its laws. Hobbes was right when he said that the long-range consequences of nonobedience to law would be a state of anarchy in which life would be "nasty, brutish, and short."

We cannot make exceptions for ourselves without extending the same privilege to others, in which case chaos could ensue. In the complex modern society in which we live, the abrogation of all laws would be unthinkable. Civilized man needs some regularity in conduct, some order and stability; and he can achieve this, in part, only by the rule of law. In a democratic society, we are committed to the basic principles of fair play. Where we disagree with these laws we should have, at least in principle, the opportunity for reform by correcting bad laws and creating new ones. Thus, all things being equal, we do have an obligation to obey the law and abide by the ground rules—unless there are overriding and extenuating circumstances.

The key issue is, *when* and *under what conditions*? And the answer is that there are no universal or infallible principles we can apply automatically. In the last analysis, whether civil disobedience may be justifiably employed depends upon the context at hand. But if there are no quick principles to apply, nevertheless there are some general guidelines that I think do assist us, in some sense, in rendering a reasonable evaluation of the merits of a proposed act of civil disobedience.

First, one may adopt the strategy of civil disobedience only if all other democratic methods of persuasion have failed. Civil disobedience should be used not as a first response, but almost as a final act of desperation.* Civil disobedience is serious

* I do not think it is a last resort, because it falls far short of acts of overt resistance and revolution—which are also acts reserved to individual conscience, as both John Locke and Thomas Jefferson recognized, and available as a *last* resort in a society where democracy has ceased to function and there is no hope but to return power to the people. I would defend the right of revolution—never in a functioning democracy or quasi-democracy where there are still methods of persuasion available—but only in a nondemocratic or totalitarian society where one wants to either restore the liberties of the people or bring into being a genuine democracy where none existed before.

business, and it cannot be used lightly: if there remain open other avenues of social reform, of dissent and opposition, criticism, protest and demonstration, then we are usually not entitled to be civilly disobedient. Often there is impatience with the tempo of social change. Patience is an essential virtue in a democratic society, even though to the young it often seems a deception practiced by the old. Appeals to patience, however, cannot be used to condone inequalities or to prevent social change. Moreover, in some situations the time element is such that we cannot sit by when a momentous wrong has occurred or is about to occur. Patience must not be abandoned at the first whimper or sign of inaction, for if democratic institutions are to survive they require some confidence in their ability to solve social problems. Similarly for the argument heard from the New Left that since one cannot change things through the system, any form of violence is justified. But who is to judge in a democracy when we can allow certain groups the privilege of becoming the arbiters of our fate and of deciding that events dictate physical force and violence?

I have here been concentrating upon the problems of civil disobedience in a democracy. But this implies that the society in which civil disobedience is based actually is a functioning democracy. Civil disobedience makes sense only in a society where we can freely appeal to public opinion. It makes much less sense in a closed, nondemocratic, or repressive society. Gandhi was effective in India, among other reasons, because he was dealing with the British, who were sensitive to democratic values and to the contradictions in having a democracy at home and an outdated colonial system abroad. Civil disobedience in a fascist or Stalinist state is not respected, tolerated, nor even permitted. Granted that if a dictatorship is to maintain itself it needs at least passive acquiescence to its rule, and that massive disobedience may be effective.

But demonstrations and protests, let alone acts of civil disobedience, usually have been the signal for greater repression. We have seen the fate of Litvinov and others who peacefully protested the Russian invasion of Czechoslovakia. What would have been their fate if they had practiced civil disobedience as it has been practiced in the United States? Civil disobedience is most meaningful in those contexts where there is some fundamental respect for individual differences of opinion and conscience and where it may help to sway both public opinion and induce a change in social policy. And in the present context, we may argue that the Western democracies, however imperfect, are still functioning constitutional democracies in the sense that methods of persuasion and dissent operate as important instrumentalities of social change.

Second, in order for civil disobedience to be used there must be some urgency, some overriding and momentous moral issue at stake and some need for prompt redress. I am suggesting that the willingness to use civil disobedience for trivial and inconsequential issues is apt to debase it. Individuals may be offended by any number of unjust laws and policies, but they ought to be willing to reserve civil disobedience for those issues considered most pernicious and those situations most extraordinary. Matters that can be deferred to the deliberate processes within the free marketplace of ideas and of constitutional change ought to be deferred. Only where there is a crisis of enormity (such as a war) has civil disobedience an appeal as a possible alternative. One must be prepared to calculate risks within the historical moment in which he acts and ask, "Would it be better or worse to the whole system of principles and values that I prize, if I were to commit this act?" Surely a democratic society can tolerate *some* disobedience, but no society can long endure epidemic conditions.

Third, we must distinguish acts of civil disobedience that are motivated by passion

from those based upon reasoned analysis. Such a distinction is not always easy to make; for there is a natural temptation to consider one's own point of view "rational" and "reasonable," and another "subjective" and "unreasonable." Nevertheless, one must insist that any acts of civil disobedience not merely accord with subjective intuitions or feelings, but that they be available to the scrutiny of critical intelligence. One should always demand a probing analysis of the justifying grounds for one's acts; presumably there should be grounds if the act is reasonable. In such an inquiry one must weigh consequences and ask whether a particular act of civil disobedience will do more long-range good to the community than any immediate gain or loss. One must be prepared to ask if the immediate loss or gain will result in a more long-range loss or gain. Undoubtedly, this should also be an important consideration for those within the black community who today wish to go far beyond civil disobedience to the use of violent methods of protest. The danger in a strategy of violence is that it tends to lead to repression, and to turn sympathy for a just cause into fear, hatred, and resentment. All methods of social change not based upon careful tactical consideration are no more than emotive ejaculations.

Fourth, accordingly, in any appraisal of the tactics of social reform one consideration that is decisive, or at least should be, is a negative test. Before acting in a situation, one ought to generalize the principle governing his act of disobedience and ask: *am I prepared to extend the same methods of civil disobedience to those with whom I disagree?* In other words, if I believe that I may, within a democracy, be civilly disobedient (or to go further, to seize buildings, disrupt, and obstruct) what would be my attitude to those who might wish to do the same, and with whom I most profoundly disagree? For example, are protesters

against Dow-Chemical and other recruiters on campuses—especially those who obstruct and disrupt—prepared to allow members of the John Birch Society, the Young Americans for Freedom, or the Ku Klux Klan to disrupt those laws, policies, and programs that they most cherish? How should the civil disobedient appraise Governor Wallace's blocking the entrance to Attorney General Katzenbach, as the latter attempted to enforce desegregation at the University of Alabama? What would be one's attitude toward such devout Catholics who, considering abortion a moral crime and equivalent to the murder of a human being, may conceivably block operating rooms where abortions may be legally performed—or vigilante groups attempting to censor movie houses that exhibit films that they consider "offensive" to their deepest moral sensibilities? In a sense, the civil disobedience employed by the weak has provided a lesson in reverse for the powerful. There is a danger that he who is willing to use civil disobedience is apt to call forth reprisals more dreadful than the original grievance the act of civil disobedience intended to ameliorate.

The stakes are high. One must be cautious in not selecting a course of action that may call into operation a "boomerang principle"; that is, if I oppose X, this may provoke a counterreaction Y in someone else. Herbert Marcuse's critique of what he calls "repressive tolerance" in democracies, i.e., the willingness to suffer injustices in the name of toleration, and his defense of intolerance of the "intolerable" is a puzzling position for someone on the Left in the United States to assume, especially since the Left is basically in a position of weakness. If Marcuse is entitled to repress those with whom he disagrees, on what basis can he deny the right wing from demanding his repression? If, because you believe that you are clearly "right" and they "wrong," you are not prepared to extend the same method of opposition to your opponents, why then

should they tolerate you, if they find you "intolerable" and if the laws or policies that you advocate go contrary to their basic moral conscience? Is it not a betrayal of democracy to insist that you have certain rights and privileges that you will not extend to others?

In matters concerning moral judgment, men of the highest intelligence and character may honestly disagree; and it is rare to find that certain individuals or groups have a monopoly on virtue, truth, or wisdom. To demand a right as exclusively yours and to deny it others is an expression of conceit.

It has a familiar clang in human history, whether it emanates from so-called political, ecclesiastical, or intellectual authorities. Thus, before one is entitled to use civil disobedience, he should ask himself in all sincerity, whether he is ready to generalize his actions, or to make an exception for himself.

There is both power and danger in the principle of civil disobedience: its power is that it helps to keep alive our moral sensitivities; its danger, that if used excessively or carelessly the whole democratic order may be threatened with erosion.

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Dennis H. Wrong

Chomsky: Of Thinking & Moralizing

AMERICAN POWER AND THE NEW MANDARINS, by Noam Chomsky.
New York: Pantheon Books. 404 pp. \$7.95.

NOAM CHOMSKY dedicates these essays "to the brave young men who refuse to serve in a criminal war." This dedication reflects the tone and mood of the entire book, which is a record of Chomsky's increasingly outraged response to the Vietnam war. Most of the book consists of articles denouncing official justifications of the war and those scholars and intellectuals who either supported it, failed to oppose it with sufficient indignation, or opposed it on grounds other than outright moral condemnation. The longer essays amount to a backward look at American foreign policy in this century and the role of intellectuals in relation to government—all in the light of Vietnam, which is seen as the unspeakable climax of modern American history, rather as historians of Germany after 1945 reexamined the German past solely as a prelude to the Nazi era. Chomsky himself continually implies, usually by rhetorical questions, that the American government and its world role are comparable to Nazi Germany, although he draws back from fully equating them. (He suggests that the U.S. needs "denazification" but quickly adds, "the question is a debatable one" on which "reasonable people may differ.")

This book, then, is primarily an indictment and an anthology of agitational manifestoes. Since much of what Chomsky says is eloquent and forceful, he succeeds in drawing blood from many of his adversaries, and since his advice to the antiwar movement is frequently wise (he advised war resisters in 1967 to avoid any semblance of violence), one is tempted to overlook his errors and rhetorical excesses and simply to praise the book as a record of the partially successful campaign against the war.

But in some quarters Chomsky is being celebrated as an important and original political thinker. The extensive documentation he appends to his longer essays has impressed several reviewers as a considerable scholarly achievement, even though it is employed not to support a new analysis of American or world politics but merely to buttress the passionate moral accusations that are the substance of all Chomsky's political writings: that the United States is hypocritical and has in the past as well as the present pursued policies in Asia belying the lofty goals proclaimed by its official spokesmen, that some American scholars have justified the horrors of the Vietnam war in euphemistic terms, and that liberal intellectuals have an "elitist" outlook that makes them willing servants of the powerful. Nor do Chomsky's admirers seem much concerned about inaccuracies in his assembled mass of quotations, although it seems to me more than a trifle to have twice grossly misquoted a President of the United States (Truman).

There is a time and place for the expression of moral indignation and a time and place for analysis of our situation; and the two are not identical. Nor do I assert this out of any commitment to the "value-free" behavioral science that Chomsky assails. (Here too he confines himself to denunciation, which hardly suffices to make him the devastating critic of positivist social science some have seen in him). But take his characterization of Vietnam as a "criminal war," a designation he uses not only in the dedication but throughout the book. The adjective undoubtedly expresses the intensity of his moral repudiation of the war. I recall being pleased with myself at the age of fifteen for

repeatedly quoting a judgment that the Munich agreement was not, as some critics contended, "criminally mistaken, but merely criminal." Since Chomsky is not primarily concerned to argue that Vietnam violates the uncertain canons of international law, his epithet contributes as little to understanding the origins and nature of the war as *Daily News* fulminations against the "criminal gang in the Kremlin" contribute to the understanding of Soviet Communism. It is scarcely illuminating to call even the Nazis "criminal"—Nazism perhaps represented criminality raised to the level of principle, but the qualification is crucial if we wish to understand it as a political mass movement.

This may appear to be trivial quibbling. But if this book is meant to initiate a reorientation in American foreign policy and the relation to it of the intellectual community, it would be patronizing to treat it simply as a stump crusade against the Vietnam war. Therefore it is worth exposing the exaggerations and the weaknesses in both fact and rational argument with which it abounds. Chomsky's two major arguments are that American world power is an unqualified evil and that American intellectuals have abdicated their moral responsibilities by serving its aims as a corps of "new mandarins." Let us first examine his indictment of American power, for while the second accusation receives greater attention in the book and has won him prominence as a kind of Savonarola of the academic world, it is relevant only if the first charge is sustained.

Chomsky asserts that "twenty years of intensive cold-war indocrination and seventy years of myth regarding our international role make it difficult to face these issues in a serious way." Which 70-year-old myth does he have in mind? The myth of "manifest destiny" in the Caribbean and the Pacific? The myth of what George Kennan in *American Diplomacy* called America's "legalistic-moralistic" approach to international relations? The myth of Wilsonian self-determination? The myth of isolationism in the 20s and 30s? Of the Crusade in Europe against Hitler? The last seventy years have shown us many opposing myths rather than a single unchanging one. Chomsky is probably thinking of manifest destiny at the turn of the century, for later in the book he attacks in some detail

American political imperialism in the Philippines and Latin America and commercial imperialism in China. Only rarely, however, does he mention the two European wars or the League of Nations and the U.N. where we obviously also played an international role.

BUT WHY DOES HE SEE the war in Vietnam as indicative of the total moral bankruptcy of American foreign policy, past and present? Is he perhaps a pacifist? One gathers not, for, while he expresses admiration for A. J. Muste's "revolutionary pacifism" and is properly appalled by the misery and destruction wrought by modern weapons, he is sceptical that unilateral pacifism as an absolute moral commitment is defensible in all historical situations. Nor is his opposition, as Lionel Abel has mistakenly contended in *Commentary*, based primarily on the commission of war crimes by American forces in Vietnam, for he dismisses both "those who were opposed to the war merely because of its costs *or its atrocities*" (my italics) as morally dubious and likely to be of little help in providing the analysis and search for new alternatives he thinks we need.

Chomsky opposes the war because he considers it a nakedly imperialist venture, an attempt by a large and powerful nation to impose by force a puppet government on a small nation against the wishes of the latter's citizens. Again and again he alludes to our readiness "to pound into rubble a small nation that refuses to submit to our will," "the attempt by our country to impose its particular concept of order and stability throughout the world," and the like. Chomsky's view is not, as some critics of American policy would have it, that out of a misguided sense of mission the United States has assumed the role of world policeman and overplayed it. To him America is as aggressively and selfishly imperialist as Japan or Britain ever were, and morally even more culpable because we are more outrageously pharisaical in our rationalizations and, in the case of Vietnam, do not have important material interests at stake such as the foreign investments, markets, sources of raw materials, need for migration outlets, or realistic concern with national security which motivated the older imperialisms. Chomsky repeatedly demands, by what *right* we take it upon ourselves to use

military force to determine the political institutions of South Vietnam? His opposition to the war, therefore, derives fundamentally from his denial of any possible moral justification for American intervention in Vietnam, or indeed virtually anywhere in the world.

To understand how the United States became involved in Vietnam surely requires an analysis of the Cold War and of the ideological assumptions developing out of it—an account of how the effort to resist Soviet expansionism in Europe was extended to Asia with the victory of the Chinese Communists and the outbreak of the Korean war, and subsequently became worldwide in scope when the Communist powers gave material or verbal support to insurgent movements in the Third World. The ideological mobilization of American public opinion to support small-scale wars and foreign interventions, as well as a permanent draft and huge defense expenditures, followed so closely on the heels of World War II that Russia and China could easily be substituted for Germany and Japan as aggressive totalitarian powers threatening world peace. And a determination to avoid the appeasement and unpreparedness of the 1930s became the *idée fixe* of our policy-makers.

But it is striking that Chomsky barely mentions this familiar background to our Vietnam involvement. The Cold War he regards simply as an ideology providing a flimsy pretext for American intervention, which he prefers instead to view as continuous with the occupation of the Philippines and the landing of marines in the Caribbean earlier in the century, rather than with the great decisions of World War II and the confrontation with Russia that was its aftermath. His long essay on Japanese expansionism in Asia in the 30s suggests that both the war with Japan and the intervention in Vietnam, which he compares to Japan's invasion of Manchuria, are best understood in the context of Asia alone—as if Japan's alliance with Germany and Italy and the Cold War with Russia originating in Europe had little to do with either.

Chomsky has no illusions whatever about Soviet actions in Eastern Europe, with which, in fact, he equates American intervention in Vietnam about as often as with past German, Japanese, or British imperialist ventures. I

think he grossly minimizes Chinese Communist aggressiveness, both in the past and as a future possibility, but he does effectively rebut invocation of the Chinese threat as an argument in favor of American policy in Vietnam. (Chomsky wrote before the latest twist given this argument, advanced the other day by Barry Goldwater: we must win in Vietnam in order to deter the Chinese, not from attacking us or our Asian allies, but from going to war with Russia, a war into which we could not avoid being drawn.) Chomsky is also clearly right in contending that several American administrations have made use of the Soviet danger to justify old-style imperialist actions: in Iran early in the Cold War where the security of oil supplies (chiefly British) was the issue, in Guatemala to support private business interests, in Cuba as a response both to pressures from private business interests and for domestic political reasons, and in the Dominican Republic solely out of a panicky fear of the domestic political consequences of even the appearance of a repetition of Castro's takeover in Cuba.

But is Vietnam comparable to these interventions? The United States has no important material interests there. Nor does Southeast Asia, in contrast to the Caribbean, fall within an openly or tacitly recognized American "sphere of interest." Nor has involvement in Vietnam ever had much appeal to popular jingoist sentiment, as opposed to actions in the Caribbean and along the Canadian and Mexican borders throughout American history. After Korea no moderately astute American politician could cherish any illusions on that score. President Johnson did not escalate the war in order to curry favor with the electorate; on the contrary, he grimly staked his Presidency on it in full knowledge of the risk, and lost. Why, then, *are* we in Vietnam? Chomsky concedes that none of the self-interested imperialist motives for which the Cold War provided a propaganda cover in Iran, Guatemala, and elsewhere were operative: in the 1930s "Japan's appeal to national interest . . . was not totally without merit" but a like appeal "becomes merely ludicrous when translated into a justification for American conquests in Asia."

Chomsky's answer is that ideology, which "can have a life of its own," has dictated Amer-

ican actions. Occasionally he attributes our Vietnam policy to sheer "paranoia," a manifestly irrational fear of a nonexistent "World Communism" inducing the most powerful nation on earth "to pound into rubble a tiny Asian country," etc., although he remains doubtful as to whether the fear is genuine, and thus a sign of "true" paranoia, or merely a fabricated excuse for our actions. In either case comparison with Nazi Germany would indeed be more appropriate than with the more "rational" imperialisms of the past. But, although he flirts with it, Chomsky declines to commit himself fully to so demoniacal a view of American policy and one is left wondering why, if ideology or even "ideological paranoia" also have something to do with it, he fails to examine the Cold War background to the war in Vietnam. Lionel Abel is entirely justified in complaining of Chomsky's "obstinate refusal to draw any consequences from the fact of Communist power."

I think Chomsky fails to analyze the Cold War background of the Vietnam war because to do so would inevitably temper the absoluteness of his condemnation of the United States. He would be drawn into consideration of such subjects as the Korean war (on which he correctly insists in an exchange with Abel he "said hardly a word in the book"); the mind of Dean Rusk fixated on the international situation of the early 50s; and how President Johnson, lacking Eisenhower's first-hand knowledge of the fallibility of generals and Kennedy's chastening experience at the Bay of Pigs, allowed the Joint Chiefs of Staff to "lead him down the garden path on Vietnam" (as Dean Acheson now reports he informed the President in early 1968 after having discovered that he himself and other top advisers had been similarly deceived).

Dwelling on these matters might suggest that American policy was no more than "criminally mistaken" rather than "merely criminal," or even that there was a partial inadvertence in our Vietnam involvement as argued by Chomsky's *bête noire*, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. Chomsky wishes to avoid such suggestions in order to present the Vietnam war as a morally unambiguous case of a big nation brutally coercing a defenseless small nation in a surrounding international vacuum. The purity and unassailability of such a moral verdict seems of major importance to Chomsky, as is indicated by his

insistence (in the letters columns of *The New York Review*) to so confirmed a dove as Stanley Hoffman that he and Hoffman, the latter's claim to the contrary notwithstanding, are in fundamental disagreement about the morality of Vietnam because Hoffman's notion of the war's immorality includes reference to the use of means that corrupt ends and entail excessive costs instead of the simple judgment that the war is immoral in and of itself.

If the war *were* a clear-cut case of brutal imperialist aggression by a great power against an isolated small country, and if American policy-makers had perceived it as such while trumping up high-sounding slogans to sell it to the public, Chomsky's charge that references to the overall costs and consequences of our policy amount to moral evasion would be entirely justified. I too oppose the Vietnam war and I agree with Chomsky that its major consequences for the Vietnamese people are not very different from what they would be if the war were no more than the crude act of American aggression Chomsky supposes it to be. But I do not agree that these consequences are the only relevant ones in evaluating the war and understanding its origins, though I think they must now be considered in themselves sufficient to obligate withdrawal from Vietnam; nor do I believe that our policy-makers are as plainly guilty of evil intentions and bad faith as they would have to be to deserve Chomsky's characterization of them as "criminal," "morally degenerate," "depraved," and the like. Nor are those critics of the war with whom Chomsky has engaged in interminable controversies, such as Schlesinger, Hoffman, and Abel, necessarily less righteous than he, more corrupted by the relativist ethic of pragmatism, or more cowardly in their readiness to give the devil his due. Viewing the war in a larger historical and geographical context than Chomsky, they are unable to see it as the unmitigated deed of international banditry, the obvious "obscenity," that is all it amounts to in his view of it.

CHOMSKY'S DOGGED PERSISTENCE in debating the grounds of opposition to the war with fellow-intellectuals who have opposed it no less firmly than he is not the result of a holier-than-thou attitude. His sincerity and moral earnestness are altogether convincing.

His conviction that the war must be condemned as intrinsically evil follows at least in part from his chosen role as prosecutor of the academic community, which he accuses of a new *trahison des clercs*. Chomsky first attracted attention as a political figure with his 1966 essay "The Responsibility of Intellectuals," which is included in the present collection. His charge that "in no small measure, the Vietnam war was designed and executed" by those scholars and experts he labels "the new mandarins" accounts for his popularity with the student Left, for, more than any other leading opponent of the war, he implicates the university directly in our Vietnam policy, thus combining the two chief targets of student protest. And he does so, of course, from a position of academic eminence—and successful federal "grantsmanship"—that few other New Left heroes can match.

Chomsky attributes the derelictions of the academic intelligentsia to their pragmatic, technicist, and behaviorist conception of man and society, which in its claim to specialized expertise both provides a rationalization for the power aspirations of intellectuals as an elite and minimizes the importance of reflection on moral values. Thus he objects when Stanley Hoffman even mentions such things as costs and consequences, ends and means, in connection with the war—as if the very words were tainted with the technicist ethos that induces men to do "with utmost efficiency, that which should not be done at all." His suspicion of the social sciences is so deep that he pointedly fails to mention the active participation of political scientists and sociologists in the earliest protests against the war, asserting that they were largely initiated by physical scientists and literary intellectuals. And he writes of Herman Kahn as if Kahn were a highly esteemed and influential figure among academic social scientists rather than a physicist who has never held a permanent university appointment.

In linking together scientism, technocracy, and Vietnam apologetics, Chomsky has created a politically explosive "amalgam," at least on the campus. He is partly to blame for the time those of us who teach social science find ourselves forced to spend convincing suspicious students that we have never done classified research for the Pentagon nor been on the CIA payroll. (Also, for the hilarious spectacle at

the meeting of the American Sociological Association last fall of young radicals acclaiming as one of their ancestors the late Pitirim Sorokin, author of *Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology* but also a refugee from Lenin's Russia and a thorough-going reactionary in most of his social and political opinions.) To Chomsky, behavioral science provides indispensable ideological support to a new technocratic intelligentsia deeply implicated in the excesses of American militarism; but several of his preferred examples of new mandarins, notably Irving Kristol and Daniel Bell, are, whatever their limitations, vigorous critics rather than partisans of the "behavioral persuasion" in social science. In France, where the Vietnam war is not a political issue, technocracy, as George Lichtheim recently reported in *The New York Review*, is the subject of intense debate *within the Left* between "technocrats" and "humanists," debate of a far higher order of intelligence than the angry tirades directed by Chomsky and the New Left against our own homegrown equivalents of technocrats.

In tacit recognition of these contradictions, Chomsky broadens his attack on the intellectuals, charging them with a long-standing "elitist" bias revealed in their Stalinist sympathies in the 1930s as fully as in their more recent affiliations with American power and their attraction to a technocratic world view. As a case in point, Chomsky turns to the treatment by American historians of the Spanish Civil War, calling attention to their neglect of the anarchist revolt in Catalonia and their acceptance of the Stalinist version of how that revolt was suppressed by the Republican government. In an exhaustive review of the evidence, which takes up more than 50 pages in his book, Chomsky retells the half-forgotten story of the revolt and its suppression. The only two contemporary accounts that are likely to be remembered today by those who are neither scholarly specialists nor surviving participants are *Homage to Catalonia* by George Orwell (who was recently accused by Mary McCarthy of being a probable supporter of the Vietnam war had he not conveniently died 20 years ago) and *The Spanish Cockpit* by Franz Borkenau (also dead for over a decade but recently attacked by Christopher Lasch as an embittered ex-Communist possessing a "quasi-totalitarian sensibility").

Chomsky relies heavily, though by no means exclusively, on both books. Unlike Miss McCarthy, he thinks that Orwell would have found "little comfort" in the uses made of his books as Cold War propaganda, and surely he is right in this. Oddly enough, Lasch in *The Agony of the American Left* brings up Borkenau as a horrible example of the very elitist mentality to which Chomsky attributes the distortions in historical scholarship on the Spanish war, yet Borkenau is one of Chomsky's main sources refuting the accepted version of the conflicts within the Loyalist camp. Apparently it's hard to tell the elitists without a scorecard!

Chomsky's account of the popular revolution in Spain in 1936-37 is a fascinating historical excursion. He makes a strong and eloquent case that liberal historians, especially Gabriel Jackson, are guilty of lack of objectivity in their ready acceptance of the Communist line at the time, which denigrated the Catalan anarchists as naive, incompetent, and undisciplined in order to justify forcibly suppressing them. But a critique of the work of contemporary historians of the Spanish war strikes one, to say the least, as a roundabout way of trying to show that Western liberal intellectuals harbor an elitist distaste for mass movements and popular revolutions which, in turn, also accounts for their support of the Vietnam war or their foot-dragging in opposing it. For Chomsky's primary reason for discussing Spain is to expose "the elitist bias that dominates the liberal-Communist interpretation of the Civil war," although he wishes also to place on record his general sympathy with anarchism and a non-Leninist populist Marxism. Yet there is, after all, a simpler explanation of why "from the left-liberal point of view that Jackson shares with Hugh Thomas and many others, the liquidation of the revolution in Catalonia was a minor event." History need not always be written from the point of view of the winners, but it does tend to concentrate on the main event, and the anarchists were the losing side on the losing side of the war in Spain.

Chomsky's discussion of Spain, however, is typical of a general style of argument that is evident in his exchanges with his critics. He passes a sweeping moral judgment or makes a far-reaching generalization and then, without

further elaboration or qualification, plunges into compiling a massive body of evidence on some highly specific event or situation that may or may not be directly and unquestionably relevant to the initial judgment or generalization. At the end of his assessment, he asserts that he remains uncertain about the truth of the original proposition but that the evidence he has assembled must be taken into account and seems to be at least consistent with it. Thus, after a lengthy analysis of the events leading up to the war with Japan, Chomsky declares himself "still . . . quite ambivalent" as to whether the United States acted in legitimate self-defense or whether A. J. Muste's doctrine of "revolutionary pacifism" is applicable to the Pacific War. After documenting the antirevolutionary bias of liberal scholarship on the Spanish Civil War, he suggests that, whether the "classical left-wing critique of the social role of intellectuals" is true or not, "at least this much is plain: there are dangerous tendencies in the ideology of the welfare state intelligentsia."

THIS APPROACH certainly gives the appearance of being refreshingly undogmatic and open to the claims of the evidence. No doubt the most appropriate method of scholarship in a large number of fields is to measure a detailed, often technical, analysis of a particular case against the implications of an established generalization and to conclude that the generalization is either valid or needs qualification or more rigorous formulation if it is still to stand. But this case-study method hardly seems to be the best way in which to make a political argument based on historical events, for any set of particulars we refer to are likely to be interconnected and the universe from which we select our particulars is a "closed" one rather than an open one containing a potentially almost infinite number of possible cases. I don't know very much about Chomsky's field of linguistics, but I strongly doubt that moral and ideological judgments of American foreign policy in the past century can be tested or supported in the same manner that is appropriate to, say, a theory of consonantal shifts in the structure of a spoken language.

Even if Chomsky is often correct both in his overall generalizations and his detailed case

Robert Lekachman

studies, the hiatus between the generalization and the particular exemplification of it is too great for his argument to possess much explanatory value. For example, he may well be right in contending that intellectuals are peculiarly susceptible to elitist political doctrines and that liberal scholarship on Spain, the Leninist vanguard concept of the Party, Stalinist fellow-traveling in the 30s, and a technocratic-managerial view of industrial society are all manifestations of this elitism. (And one might add, as Chomsky doesn't, the Marcusean theory of repressive tolerance, New Left justifications of disruptive political action by militant minorities, and the hero worship of figures like Mao, Ho, and Che by student radicals.) But if all these are instances of the elitism of intellectuals, the concept explains *too much* to be very useful. The particular context in which actually or potentially elitist doctrines are put forward then becomes all-important. Thus Chomsky cleverly cites Daniel Bell's support of the Machajski theory that modern revolutions are made by intellectuals for their own ends in the name of the masses, and then chides Bell for ignoring this insight when he approvingly assigns a leadership role to the technical intelligentsia in "postindustrial society." But, without necessarily endorsing Bell's view, one should at least note that his technocratic arguments presuppose the existence of a functioning democracy which imposes definite constraints on the managerial aspirations of intellectuals and scientists—in complete contrast to the revolutionary messianism of "discontented intellectuals" that Machajski prophetically indicted as early as 1899.

Yet in the end there is much that is attractive in Chomsky's outlook. For all the extravagance of his rhetoric, his tendency to lump together as politically insupportable a variety of things he dislikes, and his inability to sustain a general line of argument, he is largely free of the doctrinaire pettiness and polemical mean-spiritedness that so often dominates ideologues of the Left. His career as a scientist and his political sensibility remind one of the late J. Robert Oppenheimer. The Vietnam war has moved him to assume a political role, but he will probably make his presence felt on the Left long after that wretched enterprise has been concluded.

The Poverty of Antipoverty

ON UNDERSTANDING POVERTY, edited by Daniel P. Moynihan. New York: Basic Books. 425 pp. \$10.00.

ON FIGHTING POVERTY, edited by James L. Sundquist. New York: Basic Books. 256 pp. \$8.50.

THESE VOLUMES, the product of extensive meetings by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Seminar on Race and Poverty, are just about the best items in the copious literature on poverty, which has been a minor growth industry ever since Lyndon Johnson in 1964 declared unconditional war on poverty. The first volume consists mostly of papers written by the academic warriors, among them Herbert Gans, Oscar Lewis, Lee Rainwater, Harold Watts, and Stephan Thernstrom. The second volume, featuring men who played active roles in either the design or the operation of the poverty program, contains essays by, among others, Robert Coles, Sanford Kravitz, Robert Levine, Adam Yarmolinsky, and John Wofford. A useful feature of the first volume is an extensive summary by Peter Rossi of the current status of research in the causes of poverty, the characteristics of the poor, and the impact of programs designed to diminish poverty.

The essays are no fun to read. Who but a masochist or an academic hooked on social research could avoid depression at the spectacle of the endless academic debate over whether the poor are just like the rest of us only broke; whether they believe the same or different things from the middle class; and, most tedious query of all, whether there is a genuine culture of poverty as few economists and many other social scientists believe. The English in the second volume is a good deal pleasanter than the academese in which the culture of poverty argument is couched. Nevertheless, the authors arouse even sadder emotions. They tell tales of promises broken, resources denied, and Presidential favor withheld.

I do not propose here to rehearse the power-

ful arguments on both sides of the culture-of-poverty argument. I did wonder as I conscientiously followed the debate whether all the resources of American social science have advanced us much beyond the distinction made by the dustman in George Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* between the deserving and the undeserving poor—the first the humble slaves of middle-class morality and the second the blatant expositors of their own values. One inference from the contemporary argument is fairly obvious. There was expert support available for the asking for almost any position or program which a given politician might find it convenient to promote. Those who wished like Cloward and Ohlin to revise the opportunity structure were accorded their chance in projects like New York City's Lower East Side Mobilization for Youth. Those who like Gregory Farrell in Trenton emphasized jobs and training over structural change were not unduly pestered when maximum feasible participation of their poor somewhat flagged. If it did no more, the War on Poverty exposed the poverty of social science. A century earlier Karl Marx had, right or wrong, promulgated a theory of poverty far more powerful than anything currently available.

THE ACTUAL ADMINISTRATION of the War on Poverty was a splendid example of activity in search of criteria and objective. Many of the poverty fighters, as aware as Sanford Kravitz in this symposium that Congress had enacted neither an income redistribution scheme nor a large-scale public employment program, nevertheless hoped that somehow a legislative measure, which has been consistently poorly understood by the general public, meagerly financed by Washington, politically overpromoted by all participants, and jealously watched by its natural enemies in the bureaucratic thickets, would accomplish large objectives. Presumably the objectives would themselves emerge from the increasingly frantic activity of the poverty officials.

What a hope! As Kravitz observed of the Act that established the Office of Economic Opportunity,

It contains only modest program elements to effect a structural reorganization of the American community to serve the poor more effec-

tively. It has only a small part of the responsibility for dealing with the immense problem that crisscrosses federal, state, and local responsibility.

Or, as James Sundquist simply and accurately puts it in his concluding remarks,

The trouble is that there has been no decision to allocate enough of the nation's resources for employment programs, better education, better housing, better health, better cities, and all the other things that must be done.

As either a traditionally liberal or an unexpectedly radical enterprise, the War on Poverty was a failure. Most Americans displayed little or no inclination to endorse Sundquist's liberal agenda. "Better education" and so on cost money that too many people preferred to spend on their families and themselves. The war in Vietnam was of course a major complication but not in itself an adequate explanation of the preferences of a conservative country led by conservative politicians. What condemned to ineffectiveness the War on Poverty at least as much as Vietnam was the fiscal strategy chosen by John F. Kennedy and extended by Lyndon Johnson. In retrospect the fateful domestic choice of the 1960s was Kennedy's decision to take Heller's advice rather than Galbraith's during the months in 1962 and 1963 when the debate over the best way to stimulate the economy raged within the Administration. Galbraith preferred to maintain taxes and increase social spending. Heller, who won the argument, chose tax reduction. Certainly it was easier to persuade Congress to reduce taxes than to increase urban appropriations. Galbraith might, however, have been wrong in his judgment that if Kennedy had fought early and hard to create a national constituency for public spending instead of wasting his political capital on the passage of the Trade Expansion Act, he would have carried his countrymen with him.

Whoever had the better political judgment, the consequences of Kennedy's chosen course were severe. The 1964 tax slash of some \$11 billion drastically curtailed the resources available for other purposes, quite aside from the relentless demands of senseless Asiatic war. A second, somewhat smaller tax reduction in 1965 further narrowed the prospects for the funding of urban and poverty projects. During the brief heyday of the Great Society, circa 1964–65, Congress voted at least three dollars

of tax relief (largely for the benefit of middle- and upper-income recipients) for every additional dollar of expenditure upon poverty, education, health, housing, manpower training, and community action. The temper of the country and the quality of Presidential leadership—related phenomena—made it quite certain from the outset that the unconditional war against poverty would be a sham.

The financial limitations of the program were never relaxed. The initial \$1 billion never grew to as much as \$2 billion of actual appropriations in a single year. From a radical perspective, still more crippling were the political inadequacies of the War on Poverty. The radical banner "maximum feasible participation" of the poor, over which so many polemics continue to be expended, meant different things to different people. As the term was explicated to Adam Yarmolinsky, it was no more than a promise to provide actual jobs in the poverty program for the poor. But others understood the phrase to mandate a sharing of control between official agencies and the "indigenous" population. Whatever Congress thought it was writing into the law, there was simply too much haste and too little legislative history for anyone to be very confident. But when Left liberals and radicals actually working on poverty programs converted maximum feasible participation into assaults by the poor and their OEO allies upon local officials and agencies, they were predictably brought up short by Presidential wrath, admonitions by the Bureau of the Budget to deemphasize community action programs, and outcries from such puissant big-city mayors as Richard Daley and Sam Yorty. The raised voices of Daley and Yorty echoed far more loudly down the corridors of power in Washington than the sounds of poor people maximally participating in a thousand community action programs. Nobody in the statehouses and the city halls cared to surrender power to the poor. Nor was there any substantial constituency of the prosperous that was eager to rearrange the structure of American institutions on behalf of a minority which came to appear to more and more white, middle-class Americans as shiftless, immoral, and black.

WHATEVER THE INTENTIONS of its authors, the War on Poverty ended as little more than a public relations dodge, an inexpensive appeal

to the vaguely altruistic impulses of middle America, soon to be Nixon's silent majority. The devoted men and women who consumed their energies in this forlorn cause were granted neither the chance to induct the poor into the political process nor the resources to support classic liberal programs of income maintenance, public housing, job training, and job creation.

To all intents and purposes the War on Poverty is in 1969 quite dead, although as usual a bureaucratic ghost lingers on. When in the post-Nixon era the times become more propitious for social change, one can only hope that no new attempt will be made to substitute muddled social science for difficult social choices. Whoever ultimately has the better of the culture-of-poverty debate, it should not be hard for all the partisans to identify the virtues of generous income maintenance, expanded housing, and public employment for those unable to find jobs in the private sector. This is of course no more than a reasonable liberal program. Right now its prospects seem so distant that talk of a radical revision of wealth and power seems utopian.

Arthur Mitzman

German Thinkers

THE DECLINE OF THE GERMAN MANDARINS: THE GERMAN ACADEMIC COMMUNITY 1890–1933, by Fritz K. Ringer. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. 528 pp. \$13.50.

THIS BOOK on the German academy in the Wilhelmian and Weimar periods is a monument to scholarly craftsmanship, flawed only by the author's infection with a disease similar to one he diagnoses in his subject—an excessive concern with pure *Geist*. Nevertheless, Ringer's work is extremely valuable. Proceeding from Hans Rosenberg's analysis of the Prussian bureaucracy in the eighteenth century and Karl

Mannheim's sociology of knowledge, Ringer defines a deeply conservative mandarin ideology which, independently of the folkish nationalism analyzed by Fritz Stern and George Mosse, molded the dominant social attitudes of German university professors in the humanities and social sciences before the Third Reich.

The mandarins (Ringer has borrowed the term from Max Weber's description of the Chinese literati) were the ideological voice of the university-trained, largely bureaucratic elite, whose mingled feudal and bourgeois status goes back to the 18th century. Thus the professors, who possessed a considerable degree of autonomy as those "concerned with the educational diet of the elite," both molded and reflected the opinions, hopes, and fears of the bureaucratic order as a whole.

In Ringer's view, the mandarins

can become and remain a functional ruling class only during a particular phase in the material development of their country. They thrive between the primarily agrarian level of economic organization and full industrialization. At that intermediate stage . . . they will seek to constitute a kind of nobility of the educated to supersede the "merely traditional" ruling class. . . . Politically, it is the gradual transformation of an essentially feudal state into a heavily bureaucratic monarchy which favors the development of a strong and self-conscious mandarin elite. Practically all of the early mandarins are associated with the state administration in one way or another. . . . Much of the elite's history is therefore the history of a bureaucracy.

Ringer's portrayal of the "crisis" of the mandarins between 1890 and 1933 shows how their ideology produced a conservative anti-"positivist" cast in the social sciences and humanities. In showing persuasively a common thread within *Gestalt* psychology, idealist neo-Kantianism, historicism in economics and political theory, and conservative educational theory, Ringer provides for the first time in English, and perhaps in any language, a systematic survey of German scholarship in the Wilhelminian and Weimar periods, and an interpretation in terms of the professors' need to find in their disciplines absolute and eternal normative principles with which to combat the developing threat to mandarin supremacy from the new industrial order.

In most of the disciplines concerned with social theory, a minority position favoring accommodation to the new industrial order chal-

lenged the orthodox. Though this conflict has been covered before in earlier studies, it has not been discussed, to my knowledge, in the context of German scholarship as a whole, nor with the breadth of Ringer's explanatory hypothesis. Still, basic questions go unanswered and are probably unanswerable within his framework.

When Ringer explains the position of the orthodox scholars, he does so in terms of both the mandarin tradition and their identification with the imperial bureaucracy. But when he presents the basic difference between the orthodox and the modernist position in social policy, he discusses only the mandarin tradition:

the German academic heritage simultaneously suggested two rather different objections to modern capitalism. On the one hand, there was the charge that the factory system and economic rationalization in general posed a threat to the individual spirit in search of self-expression. On the other hand, there was a widespread fear of the socially disjunctive forces released by industrialization. Those who were most afraid of social conflict tended to seek harmony and order through bureaucratic social reform. Those who were concerned primarily with the spiritual dangers inherent in industrial organization faced more difficult problems.

For the orthodox, such as Schmoller and Wagner, whose main fear was social conflict, the bureaucratic program of cameralist paternalism—which provided legal and ethical rationalizations for the unlimited power of the sovereigns—supplied the answer. The modernists were most concerned with the threat posed to individualism by rationalization. Max Weber, for example, believed that paternalism

implied a degree of bureaucratization that posed a far more serious threat to the vitality of modern social life than capitalism itself. . . . In the face of these developments, he became more and more committed to the pluralistic class politics of overt parliamentary bargaining as an alternative to hypocrisy and stagnation.

ONE MIGHT ASSUME that, if the orthodox Mandarins espoused cameralism mainly because they identified with the bureaucratic social order of Imperial Germany, the modernists, who opposed cameralism in the name of some kind of political and social pluralism, might have identified to a degree with the social forces that stood to gain by their position. Not so, according to Ringer. The German sociologists of the fin-de-siècle, the principle group of mod-

ernists in the social sciences, though they echoed some of the concerns of romantic political theory, were themselves simon-pure mandarins. They "had no roots in the capitalist middle class—felt no commitment to proletarian socialism. They were mandarins and they spoke for themselves." In their interest in free and spontaneous association, their belief that the state bureaucracy was the nemesis, not the savior of the community, the sociologists merely "represented the Humboldtian side of the tension between intellectuals and bureaucrats which never entirely disappeared from mandarin consciousness."

Again, Ringer's portrayal of the basic positions in the modernist-orthodox quarrel is excellent. But why should he expect us to believe that only the cameralist position was sullied by identification with extra-academic interests? This is by no means to imply that the sociologists were simply the ideologists of the liberal middle class. Still, if we accept Ringer's depiction of the bureaucratic identification of the orthodox, it is only reasonable to assume some kind of tie between the modernists and the middle- and working-class opposition to the bureaucratic empire.

Such ties are easy to document. Indeed, Ringer acknowledges at one point that "the modernists sought support for their own program from the middle-class National Liberal and Progressive parties." But it is nonetheless "their own program," presumably derived in lineal descent from Humboldtian liberalism. In contrast, if we examine three of the principal modernists discussed by Ringer—Simmel, Sombart, and Weber—we find that in the nineties all three derived their political hopes not from the excellent Wilhelm von Humboldt, but from contemporary, extra-academic movements of a left-liberal or socialist character. (The social origin of all three men was as heterodox as their social views. Sombart and Weber were of Huguenot extraction, Simmel's parents were converted Jews. Sombart's father was for a time the owner of a sugar-processing factory; Weber's uncle and grandfather were capitalists in textiles; Simmel's father and grandfather were merchants.)

Sombart wrote extensively in the nineties for the journals of Heinrich Braun, a moderate socialist, and his closest friend before 1900 was the Swiss socialist Otto Lang. Judging by a let-

ter to Lang of 1893, we might conclude that Sombart felt a stronger commitment at that early point in his career to socialism than to the academy:

We are all standing behind you, more than you think. And what keeps us at the lectern is for one thing a matter of disposition—I, for example, would make a very poor party man—and partly, a healthy objective opportunism. . . . it can be of great use if the German universities by and by are filled with a new spirit. Still we don't all believe in miracles, but in a slow education and transformation, even of minds. . . . In a certain sense, we young writers and teachers are the most advanced posts of the great proletarian army, and the most suspicious ones to the enemy.

Weber's political attachment in the nineties to the group of left-liberal pastors around Friedrich Naumann is amply documented and not unfamiliar to Ringer. What is less known is that Weber's scholarly work of the nineties on the East Elbian land problem was permeated with a mixture of Jacobin-tinged revolutionary nationalism, identification with the strivings for liberation of the rural proletariat, and generational revolt against the curse of epigonism with which his father's generation of scholars and politicians had burdened him.

Simmel was not politically active in the nineties, but his extra-academic attachments are made clear by his record of publication. His involvement in what Paul Honigsheim has called "the unofficial Berlin culture" ("materialism, mechanism, and similar concepts of primarily English origin") was manifested by his articles in the socialist journals *Die Neue Zeit* and *Vorwärts*, in Braun's *Sozialpolitisches Centralblatt* and in the left-liberal *Die Zukunft*.

Ringer largely ignores the political climate of the early nineties and its relationship to the modernist challenge in social policy. But without the lapsing of the antisocialist laws, Bismarck's dismissal, the transient desire of the young Wilhelm II to open a new era in German social relations, and the consequent emergence of socialist reformism—without all these, Sombart's outspokenly prosocialist stand, the emergence of Naumann's group as an effort to link moderate socialists and liberals, Simmel's left-liberal interests, in general the spasm of hope that then passed through the radical constituency in Germany would seem improbable.

That these hopes were then strangled with

the conservative ascendancy of the mid-nineties does much to explain why the political engagement of our three sociologists gave way to profound pessimism after 1900.

Ringer treats this cultural pessimism as part of the crisis of mandarin culture, and he seriously neglects its extra-academic social and political context. Yet it should have given him pause that the four figures whose theories of cultural decadence he chose as most representative of mandarin pessimism were all modernists, indeed, three of them "radical modernists" (von Wiese, Simmel, and Alfred Weber). For after their surge of political engagement in the nineties, the sociologists elaborated theories of cultural decadence which reflected not so much mandarin estrangement from mass society and bureaucratization as the estrangement of once-radical bourgeois intellectuals from the social rigidity of both modern Germany and the academy, their intimate nemesis.

IF RINGER'S MANDARIN HYPOTHESIS were correct, one would expect Simmel, Weber, and Sombart, after their phase of radical engagement, to be more attached to the academy and its traditions than before; yet the reverse is true. Before 1900 Simmel published half of his articles in nonscholarly journals; after 1900, nearly three-quarters. He found his intellectual home after 1900 not in the academy but in the literary circle around Stefan George.

Weber and Sombart were also on the margins of the academy before World War I. Weber, through a combination of overwork and guilt about aspects of his personal life, suffered a complete nervous collapse between 1897 and 1903 and could not accept teaching responsibilities until 1918. If Sombart, in 1899, underscored his contempt for his colleagues' fondness for rural virtue with the remark that "Flowers and delicatessen are the only contributions of agriculture to the refinement of life's pleasures," Weber, a decade later, expressed a similar scorn for the bureaucratic servility of his time:

Frightful as the thought may be, that the world might someday be full of nothing but professors—we would flee to the desert were that to occur—yet more frightful is the thought that the world should be filled with nothing but those cogs, those simple men who cling to a little post and strive for a somewhat greater

post—a condition which we rediscover both in the papyrus and, increasingly, in the spirit of the contemporary bureaucracy and above all in its next generation, our present students.

Nor is it surprising that the "modernists" provided the most coherent critique of modernity. For the antimodernism of the orthodox mandarins was undermined, at least before 1918, by their trust in the academy and the bureaucratic state as defenses against the masses. By comparison, the perspective of Weber and the sociologists was indeed disenchanted, for in their view the bureaucratic state and the academy were themselves only manifestations of the rationalization of all spheres of life.

The superior formulation of the problem by the modernists was the result precisely of their intellectual distance from the mandarin consciousness, their perception of the modern world from the vantage point of the stillborn bourgeois radicalism of 1848, the brief echo of which they perceived and identified with during the nineties.

Much of what I write is familiar to Ringer, yet he fails to find an adequate context for it. He notes that the radical modernist "was typically an outsider in some way. Very often, he had contacts in the world of the nonacademic, unofficial, and unconnected intelligentsia, with artists, journalists and writers." Considering the extent and weight of such contacts among the modernist mandarins, the point would seem to merit elaboration. What does he do with this theme? A page later he comes back to it:

there were always two totally different and unrelated groups of intellectuals in Germany: the highly respected, official establishment of the university professors, and a volatile, "bohemian," and almost indiscriminately acid minority of radicals. The problem is still to account for the peculiarly sharp antagonism between the critic and the conventional academic. Could it be that the language of "idealism" had something to do with all this?

Ringer's answer is, of course, yes. The mandarin tradition bred in its representatives the arrogant presumption that they held a monopoly on pure *Geist*, a disdain for worldly matters, and a condemnation of those who challenged them as "materialists" and "positivists." Consequently,

mild criticisms of conventional notions were

very hard to express. To challenge the orthodox at all, the critic almost had to make a leap into a new vocabulary, one in which interests could be considered, groups were sums of people, and the rule of the spirit was an ideal, not a reality. . . . The orthodox mandarins . . . became arrogant and humorless until their moralistic rhetoric was impenetrable. Faced with their self-assurance, the would-be challenger was forced into the technique of radical debunking. Aster's fury and Weber's irony were in part the result of frustration. Thinking of Marx and of Bertolt Brecht, of Nietzsche and of Freud, one begins to suspect that idealism has always produced its own enemies.

But Ringer himself is aware that the guarantor of the claim of idealist rhetoric to a monopoly on spirit was the claim of Germany's bureaucratic state to the monopolistic control of bodies. The conflict in rhetoric was shadow; the substance was the conflict between the old Adam in us all—spontaneity, art, play, and

emotion—and Prussian bureaucratic absolutism. In the context of this conflict, similar to the one that haunts our own increasingly bureaucratized society and that is the source of so much of our student unrest, we can best understand the concern with Nietzsche and Marx—otherwise neglected within the German academy—by those who inherited their critical role: Tönnies, Sombart, Weber, and Simmel. We can also, I hope, see the contemporary relevance of that role and its representatives. For if there is one fundamental criticism I would make of Ringer's massive work, it is that by reducing the critical social theory of these men to a variety of mandarin *ressentiment*, he both obscures the social reality with which they were dealing and denigrates as little more than maudlin rhetoric a body of social theory whose assimilation by contemporary radical thought is at once imperative and long overdue.

LETTERS

Editor:

In Professor Robert J. Christen's Comment on the NYCLU and the Ocean-Hill Brownsville dispute which so sadly shook that organization [DISSENT September–October 1969], he quotes me as calling for the ACLU "to go beyond the traditional civil liberties concerns to work for social and distributive justice" and "meaningful democratic participation." Although the quotes are quite accurate, I think a few words may explain my meaning somewhat more than these two phrases.

To many of us, the central issue of our times is whether and how the members of a huge industrial society can obtain control over the political, economic, social, and other institutions which dominate their lives. We favor decentralization of schools, police, and other social organs, and strong welfare rights groups, tenants groups, and the like, for the same reason that most civil libertarians have traditionally supported union efforts to organize. Without such power, all the court victories on the right to speak, all the successfully defended prosecutions, are relatively inconsequential; with such power, the occasions for such repression may be reduced.

This is not to say that there are no risks involved, but I think they are less than those projected by Mr. Christen. The risks of losing credibility seem to me especially small for the Union's credibility

is neither so fragile nor so tightly tied to neutrality as he argues; indeed, the credibility argument has been raised many times, and in many different guises, and there is still precious little experience to validate it.

In short, just as the right to vote for legislative representatives is indispensable to political liberty, so is the right to control the all-important social institutions in ways appropriate to their operation. It is in this effort at making democracy meaningful in social as well as political contexts that I think the ACLU and its affiliates should get involved.

HERMAN SCHWARTZ, Professor of Law
State University of New York at Buffalo

ROBERT J. CHRISTEN *Replies:*

The purpose of my article was not to speculate about the central issues of our time. I was simply trying to say that the ACLU exists for the quite worthy purpose of defending and advancing individual liberties as guaranteed by the Bill of Rights.

I have no argument with the concept of decentralization, but I do believe that Professor Schwartz would do well to remember that gross violations of human rights generally, and of civil liberties in particular, can and do occur in small, even socially homogeneous communities. This holds for the North as well as the South.

I certainly want to see the NYCLU continue its efforts to serve the needs of the entire community, but it should be able to do this without sacrificing due process and other concepts which have served as the bedrock of civil liberties.

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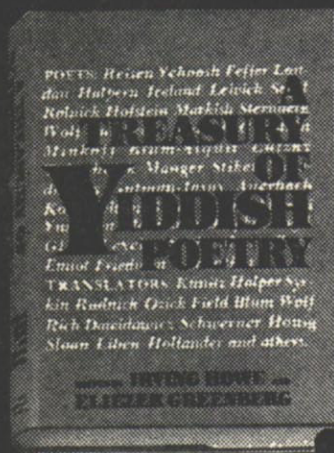
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